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HOBBS'S CRITIQUE OF RELIGION  
*A Contribution to Understanding the Enlightenment*  
(1933–34)



INTRODUCTION

§1. Occasion and Purpose of the Study

If the struggle between belief and unbelief is “the proper, sole, and deepest theme of all world and human history,”<sup>1</sup> Hobbes’s critique of religion merits the greatest attention. Of the numerous challenges to religion, revealed as well as natural, brought forth by the classical age of the critique of religion—the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—there are not many that can match Hobbes’s *Leviathan* in historical effectiveness, few that can match it in decisiveness of denial, and none that can match it in radicalism of justification [*Begründung*]. Spinoza’s theologico-political treatise is indeed, as Hobbes himself acknowledged, “bolder” than *Leviathan*, i.e., more reckless in drawing out and stating its consequences; but this boldness is purchased at the price of renouncing the proper foundation of the critique, which is found much more in *Leviathan* than in the theologico-political treatise.

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Noten und Abhandlungen zum besseren Verständnis des West-Östlichen Divans: Israel in der Wüste* [Notes and Discourses for the Better Understanding of the Western-Eastern Divan: Israel in the Desert]. [The exact German reference is to be found in *Goethes Werke*, vol. 2, *Gedichte und Epen*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1962), 208.]



Despite its very great significance, Hobbes's critique of religion has not previously been subjected to a systematic analysis. The reason for this neglect has to do with the conviction, common to supporters and opponents, that this critique was a necessary byproduct of Hobbes's *natural philosophy*. This conviction had a certain legitimacy as long as the older view that Hobbes's natural philosophy was a materialistic metaphysics held undisputed sway. But after the investigations, above all, of F. Tönnies established [*befestigt*] the view that Hobbes's natural philosophy is not so much a materialistic metaphysics as a foundation of modern natural science, the relation of this natural philosophy to the critique of religion had to become problematic. For even if one is also, like Tönnies, of the opinion that there is a necessary connection between modern natural science and the critique of religion, one still cannot pass over the fact that this connection is in any case not evident: precisely those men who deserve the greatest credit for founding [*Begründung*] modern natural science—Descartes, Newton, and Leibniz—were anything but enemies of belief. If, therefore, Hobbes's natural philosophy is to be characterized not immediately as materialistic metaphysics but rather initially as the foundation of modern natural science, and since, on the other hand, the connection between natural science and the critique of religion is in no way self-evident, an independent investigation of Hobbes's critique of religion is, in view of the latter's preeminent significance, a sensible undertaking.

Hobbes's critique of religion is thus often regarded, with initially dubious justice, as a merely secondary result of his natural philosophy. It remains to ask whether this critique should not be understood as more immediately part of his *political science*. It is ultimately no accident that his statements belonging to the critique of religion are to be found less in his natural scientific than in his political writings. No less than the explicitly entitled work of Spinoza, these latter are *theologico-political* treatises: more than a third of *De cive* and approximately one half of *Leviathan* are devoted to theological questions. If therefore there are compelling reasons for making an engagement with Hobbes's political science into a desired goal, his critique of religion requires an extensive analysis. A brief statement of these reasons is indispensable for the justification [*Rechtfertigung*] of our project.

Hobbes is the *founder of modern politics*. He himself made the claim on his own behalf that he was the first to raise politics to the rank of a science; and his contemporaries, whether in complete admiration or complete consternation, at least conceded to him that his politics constituted an unheard-of innovation. This view has been corrected by more recent developments in a few, but not essential, points. Admittedly, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the prevailing Hobbes research could show more and more

that important elements of the Hobbesian teaching are attested to in the earlier literature; but on the basis of this evidence, through which Hobbes's work seemed temporarily to represent a self-realized fusion of traditional elements, the original impression is conclusively restored: even if this or that feature of Hobbesian politics was already to be found in the earlier literature, Hobbes gave them a unity that they did not have by themselves but that they could gain solely on the basis of an analysis undertaken from an altogether original point of view. There are indeed considerable features of Hobbesian politics that were seen as unsuitable by later thinkers and that were hence eliminated; but even today his harshest critics themselves admit that he was the first to develop the concept of *sovereignty* with full clarity; and since this concept is not just one concept among others but the foundation [*Fundament*] of modern politics,<sup>2</sup> Hobbes is the founder of modern politics. An understanding of Hobbes's political science, then, is the elementary precondition for any radical understanding of modern politics.

The doctrine of sovereignty in Hobbes's philosophy is connected, not only with his absolutist conception of the state, but also with his "pessimistic" view of human nature and his "materialistic" metaphysics. The [later] moderns in general retained the doctrine of sovereignty and abandoned the context in which that doctrine was originally developed. The presupposition of this procedure was the conviction that this connection was not necessary but merely conditioned by the historical situation of the seventeenth century, or rather, by Hobbes's prejudices. We shall not venture to decide whether this conviction is warranted. The presupposition for such a decision would be an impartial analysis of Hobbes's political science, which would not be possible without elaborate preparations. Belonging to these preparations in particular is the understanding of Hobbes's critique of religion, which, as we have already indicated, is an integral feature of his political science.

According to the reigning opinion, Hobbes's critique of religion is also an accidental epiphenomenon of the rise of modern politics. This judgment also requires reexamination. If indeed one may speak in general of a specifically *modern* concept of the state, which, as it seems, is permissible, that reexamination must be guided by the insight that there must also be a specifically modern metaphysics or theology, on the basis of which this concept of the state gains its evidence; for every view of man and the state implies a view of the world and God, whether theistic or atheistic. Whether Hobbes's

2. C. E. Vaughan, *Studies in the History of Political Philosophy Before and After Rousseau* (Manchester: University Press, Longmans, Green, 1925), 1:23 and 55.

theology, therefore, which one characterizes at the outset more appropriately as a critique of religion, is the presupposition of modern politics is a question that absolutely requires an investigation. In order for this investigation to be possible, it is first necessary to establish what Hobbes's teaching on the critique of religion actually says and means. The aim of the present treatment is to establish precisely that.

## §2. Hobbes's Politics and the Critique of Revelation

Hobbes founded his political science in opposition to two frequently but not always allied traditions: the tradition of philosophic politics, whose originator was for him *Socrates*, and the tradition of theological politics, which appeals to *revelation*. Since revelation in his time was by far a greater authority than classical politics, his attack is directed principally against the tradition of theological politics, more exactly, against the dualism of temporal and spiritual power that was asserted or certainly not radically excluded by it. But in this confrontation the original and fundamental theme of politics does not enter the discussion; for every confrontation over the dualistic or monistic character of "power" has as its presupposition the explanation of the meaning of "power," the answer to the question of the meaning and purpose of the state; and on this question, Hobbes has only the tradition of philosophic politics to confront. Hence, Hobbes's genuine teaching comes together only in his critique of the philosophic politics of classical antiquity. But this critique would not have been possible without revelation and its denial; revelation or the polemic against revelation is what makes the acceptance of classical politics impossible for Hobbes.

Whatever else may turn out to be true in general about the relationship between the critique of religion and modern politics, Hobbes's politics is at any rate indissolubly connected with his critique of religion: religion is *the* enemy of this politics. For this politics is based on the axiom that violent death is the greatest evil;<sup>3</sup> religion, by contrast, teaches that there is a greater evil even than violent death, namely, eternal punishment after death in hell; religion therefore denies the foundation of Hobbesian politics.<sup>4</sup> Hence, this

3. Cf. especially *De cive*, epistola dedicatoria [epistle dedicatory], and *De cive* 1.7 [*De Cive: The Latin Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)].

4. "[I]t is impossible that a Commonwealth should stand, where any other than the Sovereign, hath a power of giving greater rewards than Life; and of inflicting greater punishments, than Death. Now . . . Eternall life is a greater reward, than the life present; and Eternall

politics remains questionable as long as the teaching of religion is not refuted: it is *dependent* on the critique of religion.

The foundation of Hobbesian politics is admittedly called into question not only by religion: the philosophic tradition also denies that death is the greatest evil. But the objection of the philosophers is of significance for Hobbes only if it implies that death is not the greatest evil because there is a life after death; and according to his explicit view, it is precisely this presupposition that cannot be vouched for by reason, but only by revelation.<sup>5</sup> Hence, according to Hobbes's own view, revelation is the only danger to his politics. This politics, therefore, is dependent not on a critique of religion in general so much as on a critique of *revealed* religion. Accordingly, it is no accident that of the eighteen chapters of *Leviathan* devoted to the critique of religion, only two chapters treat natural religion, by contrast with sixteen chapters that treat revealed religion. And not only this: Hobbes insists on the complete separation between philosophy, natural reason, on the one hand, and religion, on the other; the sole source of religion is revelation.<sup>6</sup>

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torment a greater punishment than the death of Nature" (*Leviathan*, chap. 38, near the beginning). Cf. also the next comment. [Strauss says in *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (xiii) that he used the edition of *Leviathan* by A. D. Lindsay (London: J. M. Dent, 1914). We have used instead the more easily available edition of Richard Tuck *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). All page numbers refer to the Tuck edition.]

5. "ratione naturali sciri non possunt, sed revelatione tantum . . . esse praemia et poenas post hanc vitam; animam esse immortalem et similia" ["cannot be understood by natural reason, but only by revelation; . . . that there are rewards, and punishments after this life; that the soul is immortal . . . and the like"]. *De cive* 17.13. [We have used the translation of *De cive* attributed to Hobbes himself, readily available in *Man and Citizen (De Homine and De Cive)*, ed. Bernard Gert, T. S. K. Scott-Craig, and Charles T. Wood (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991).] "There be some that . . . will not have the Law of Nature, to be those Rules which conduce to the preservation of mans life on earth; but to the attaining of an eternall felicity after death . . . But . . . there is no naturall knowledge of mans estate after death . . . but onely a belief grounded upon other mens saying, that they know it supernaturally, or that they know those, that knew them, that knew others, that knew it supernaturally." *Leviathan*, chap. 15 (103).

6. "Contra hanc Empusam [sc. Scholasticam θεολογία] exorcismus, credo, melior excogitari non potest, quam ut religionis . . . regulae . . . a philosophiae regulis . . . distinguantur, quaeque religionis sunt Scripturae Sacrae, quae philosophiae sunt rationi naturali tribuantur." ["Against this Empusa (to wit, scholastic theology) I believe one cannot discover a better exorcism than to distinguish the rules . . . of religion . . . from the rules of philosophy, and to assign the things of religion to Holy Scripture, and the things of philosophy to natural reason."] *De corpore*, epistola dedicatoria. *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera philosophica quae latine scripsit omnia*, ed. William Molesworth (London: John Bohn, 1839–45), 1: epistle dedicatory. [Strauss refers, as is common, to Hobbes's Latin writings as *Opera Latina*, and we do the same from now on.]

Hobbes confines the natural knowledge of God and divine things within such narrow limits that he can ultimately even expel them root and branch from the realm of philosophy.<sup>7</sup> Hence, by elucidating Hobbes's position on revelation, one accomplishes everything, or almost everything, that one generally requires in order to understand his position on religion.

In order to assess the entire significance that the critique of revelation has for Hobbes's politics, one must recall the situation in which this science\* originated. Owing to the consequences of the Reformation, theological politics had become more questionable than ever before: theological politics seemed to lead by necessity, not to order and peace, but to the horrors of the wars of religion. If order and peace were finally to come about, what was required, as it seemed, was a politics resting solely on the self-sufficient reflection of man. Such a politics had been elaborated by classical philosophy. But the philosophic politics that rested on the foundations conceived by Socrates had not only not refused an association with theology; it had also not *been able* to refuse this; in any case it had provided theological politics with some of its most dangerous weapons.<sup>8</sup> Hence, a *new* politics was required that would not merely be independent of theology but also make any relapse into theological politics impossible for all future time. In other words, what was required was not a politics that, like classical politics, *preceded* revelation and hence, as it seemed, had not risen to meet the claim of revelation, but rather one that contended with this claim from the outset, and therefore *succeeded* revelation. Hence, the critique of revelation is not merely a subsequent, though necessary, *supplement* to Hobbesian politics but its *presupposition*, indeed the presupposition of Hobbes's philosophy in general.

This claim, as must be conceded and emphasized immediately, stands in manifest contradiction with the appearance given by Hobbes's critique of revelation, and especially with his critique of theological politics: a glance at *Leviathan* shows that the critique of theological politics, which appears in the guise of a teaching resting on revelation about the Christian state, follows the purely rational teaching about man and state, that therefore Hobbes's critique of revelation rests on his elaborated philosophic teaching. This procedure seems to be fully unobjectionable. It is in fact not exposed to any considerable objection as long as philosophy, particularly philosophic politics, is held to be self-evident. But if this presupposition becomes doubt-

7. *De corpore* 1.8.

\* Strauss seems to be referring here to Hobbes's political science—TRANS.

8. See especially *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (469–72).

ful, the question arises as to whether the structure of *Leviathan* does not conceal the real foundational relation between philosophic politics, indeed of philosophy in general, on the one hand, and the critique of revelation, on the other.

In view of what Hobbes claimed was the failure of all previous attempts to treat politics scientifically, one should suppose that it would have been obvious for him to consider seriously<sup>9</sup> whether the question whose response is the task of political science—the question about the right order of human life as living together—is not already answered by revelation before it is asked, or whether this question can even be answered by human means at all and not rather by revelation alone, and whether, therefore, the politics of the philosophic tradition had not simply failed because it expected from human reason an achievement beyond its power. Possibilities of this kind, however, are excluded for Hobbes from the outset: it is not revelation to which he turns after he loses confidence in Aristotle and his teachers and students but Thucydides and then Euclid, Galileo, and Descartes. A *revelation*, in his view, cannot have the evidence, and hence the authority, that it would require in order to present the rules for human life and living together in a binding manner; and apart from that, political *science*, if only one has the right method at one's disposal, is self-evidently possible. Therefore, whereas theological politics, as it seems, may be confidently ignored, a serious confrontation with philosophic politics, with the politics of the classical philosophers, is necessary as a matter of principle. The basis for this confrontation is the possibility and necessity, acknowledged by both sides, of a political science, of a human ordering of human life. This positive agreement, decisively important despite or because of its inconspicuousness, corresponds to a negative agreement that immediately concerns us here: just as the *conditio sine qua non* [indispensable condition] for the Socratic question about the right life and the true state, from which the teaching of the philosophic tradition arose, is the decay of the belief in the divine laws of Greek antiquity, so too the decay of the belief in the authority of revelation is the *conditio sine qua non* for Hobbes's recovery of the Socratic question. Accordingly, the critique of revelation would merely be the explication of the occasion for Hobbes's political science, and therefore something that one usually tends to dispose of in a foreword or introduction, but not *more* than that. If this were really the case, the fact that approximately half of *Leviathan* is devoted to theological

9. As did Pascal in the same historical situation as Hobbes's, and according to kindred philosophic presuppositions; cf. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées et Opuscules*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg (Paris: Hachette, 1897), fragments 291 ff. and 331.

questions would itself be fully unexplainable. The belief in revelation is for Hobbes more than an accidental error, whether it be made by an individual or by entire epochs; namely, it is the ideal case of the typical obstacle, given with human nature itself, to knowledge of truth and the construction of the true state. Hence, the counterpart of Hobbes's critique of revelation is not Socrates-Plato's "critique" of the divine laws of Greek antiquity; rather, the critique of revelation has the same constitutive significance for Hobbes's politics that the critique of *sophistry* has for Platonic politics. The critique of revelation means this much, though not more, to Hobbes himself. But after he had engaged in the critique of revelation, having been compelled by the power that revelation exercised over his age, if not over him, it was no longer only his view but also the object of his critique that decided the character, as well as the significance, of that critique. Now, insofar as the desired goal of a political science, which arose for Hobbes in view of the failure of all previous politics, is called into question, or rather, is fulfilled by revelation, or at least loses its urgency, the critique of revelation becomes, in essence, the radical justification of that desired goal, the demonstration of the possibility and necessity of political science. In this sense, the critique of revelation is the necessary prolegomenon to Hobbes's politics: the genuine *founding* [*Grundlegung*] of that politics, indeed of his whole philosophy, is concealed in the critique of revelation.<sup>10</sup> Since this founding, however, is less revealed than *concealed* in that critique, the task of analysis must be to extract the truly foundational elements of the critique of revelation from the thicket of arguments, some of which in fact only secure subsequently a view already established, or at most touch on a view being explained concurrently.

### §3. The Different Versions of Hobbes's Critique of Religion

Hobbes developed his critique of religion in a systematic manner four times, and in fact each time within the framework of his political science: in *The Elements of Law* (1640), in *De cive* (1642 and 1647, respectively), and in the English and Latin versions of *Leviathan* (1651 and 1668, respectively).

10. One should understand fundamentally in the same way Spinoza's theologico-political treatise as a prolegomenon to his *Ethics*; cf. my writing, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997], 112ff. and 123ff. Léon Brunschvicg makes a similar judgment ("De la vraie et de la fausse conversion" [On True and False Conversion], *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 1932, 20), when he says that Spinoza makes "de l'exégèse de la Bible dans le *Tractatus theologico-politicus* une introduction au spiritualisme de l'Éthique" [of the critical exegesis of the Bible in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* an introduction to the spiritualism of the *Ethics*].



Since there are considerable differences among these four presentations, one must pose to oneself the question of which presentation is to be regarded as the most authentic or authoritative.

As has been shown elsewhere,<sup>11</sup> on the path from the *Elements* to the English *Leviathan* Hobbes underwent, to a certain extent, the development from Anglicanism to Independentism. In any case, on this path, from presentation to presentation, his distance from the religious tradition becomes greater and more visible. The English *Leviathan* contains the "most radical" presentation of Hobbes's critique of religion. In this work, and in it alone, Hobbes openly professes that he is concerned with the dismantling, the "Analysis, or Resolution," of the entire religious tradition.<sup>12</sup> The Latin version of this work is partly a very free translation of the English *Leviathan*, in which the text is considerably—about a third—abridged, in the process, however, leaving the structure of the whole complete and the structure of the individual chapters, in most cases, unchanged.<sup>13</sup> Numerous inessential changes can be explained by the fact that the English version is principally addressed to the unlearned, the Latin by contrast to the learned; more noteworthy, even if not important for knowledge of Hobbes's principles, are the deviations occasioned by the transformation of the political situation: the English version appeared under parliamentary rule, the Latin appeared after the Restoration.<sup>14</sup> In particular, the changes in the parts of *Leviathan* [devoted to] the critique of religion that Hobbes occasionally made in the Latin edition are to be understood as concessions to the then current regime. The decisive profession of Independentism in the English *Leviathan* is replaced by an equally decisive rejection of the entire English Revolution.<sup>15</sup> The sharp and extensive critique of the Roman Church, which fills the entire fourth part of *Leviathan*—it is entitled "The Kingdome of Darknesse"—is now supposed to have as its exclusive purpose the defense of the Church of England.<sup>16</sup> With this in mind, Hobbes partly struck out and partly tempered a

11. See Strauss, *Political Philosophy of Hobbes* [74 and context].

12. *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (479f.).

13. Hobbes made the considerable changes—besides replacing the "Review and Conclusion" with a completely newly written "Appendix"—in chapters 46 and 47.

14. Compare, in this connection, Ferdinand Tönnies, *Hobbes: Leben und Lehre* (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1896), 248; J. Lips, *Die Stellung des Thomas Hobbes zu den politischen Parteien der grossen englischen Revolution* (Leipzig, 1927), 75–82; Z. Lubieński, *Die Grundlagen des ethisch-politischen Systems von Hobbes* (Munich, 1932), 253–74.

15. Cf. *Opera Latina*, 3:508–10 [Latin version of *Leviathan*] with *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (479f.).

16. *Opera Latina*, 3:508.



very great number of passages containing reservations against the church.<sup>17</sup> He thus attempted to fulfill the promise contained in the explanation, openly opposed to the truth, given to Charles II in the year 1662: "There is nothing in it [i.e., in the *Leviathan*] against Episcopacy."<sup>18</sup> A more exact comparison of the Latin version with the English leads to the conclusion that there can be no question of Hobbes's turning back to the more measured statements of his earlier writings: apart from a slight tempering of the form, in its essence, the Latin version adheres throughout to those teachings by which the English *Leviathan* is characteristically distinguished from *De cive* and the *Elements*. In the appendix to the Latin *Leviathan*, Hobbes does indeed retract the most offensive heresies of the English version; but even the least mistrustful reader recognizes at once that the retractions are not meant in earnest.<sup>19</sup> Hobbes's last word in matters of the critique of religion is therefore not to be sought in the Latin but in the English version of *Leviathan*. Since the English *Leviathan*, moreover, contains the most extensive and most complete presentation of Hobbes's critique of religion, it ranks as the authoritative presentation.

Even though the English *Leviathan* contains the frankest presentation of the Hobbesian critique of religion, this is not to say that in that work Hobbes sets forth his actual view undisguisedly.<sup>20</sup> Hobbes generally proceeds by beginning with fully or mostly orthodox-sounding statements, in order to lead these statements afterward, in a more or less veiled manner, *ad absurdum*. In the further course of the investigation, however, he often makes no explicit use of the results of his critique, but rather avails himself of

17. Thus in the Latin version he removed in particular an "explanation" of the Trinity equivalent to its denial. See *Leviathan*, chap. 16 (114) and 42 (339f.).

18. *English Works*, ed. William Molesworth (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1839–45), 7:5 [epistle dedicatory to *Seven Philosophical Problems and Two Propositions of Geometry*]. Cf. also the statement (likewise written after the Restoration) in support of the Episcopal church order in *English Works*, 4:364 [*An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book, called "The Catching of the Leviathan"*] and 407 and *Opera Latina*, 1:xvi [*An Historical Narration Concerning Heresy, and the Punishment Thereof*]. Cf., on the other hand, *Behemoth*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1889), reprinted with a new introduction by Stephen Holmes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 56f.

19. Lubieński himself, who, incidentally, finds "generally . . . in Hobbes a pronounced attachment to the Christian religion and a great respect for the Holy Scriptures" (217), admits (*ibid.*, 212) this about the retraction of the "explanation" of the Trinity in *Opera Latina*, 3:563f.

20. Aubrey says: Hobbes "told me he [sc. Spinoza's *Tractatus-theologico-politicus*] had cut through him a barren's length, for he durst not write so boldly" (*Brief Lives*, ed. Andrew Clark [Oxford, 1898], 1:357). His statement compels one to consider in the first place whether even the boldest remarks found in Hobbes's writings approximate sufficiently his actual view.

the previously rejected opinions, as though they were self-evidently correct, in order to refute other traditional teachings covertly.<sup>21</sup> In order to get to know his actual view, one must therefore attempt to collect, as Hobbes no doubt intentionally neglected to do, the results of his critique, which are strewn among many passages of the work. This depends not so much on the completeness of the collection or even on the selection of the most offensive heresies as such as on connecting the central thoughts in the critique of religion.

In order to protect our interpretation against every danger and suspicion of being arbitrary, we proceed, however, not from the overall impression indicated many times by the tendency of Hobbes's critique of religion, but from the assumption that Hobbes was a believing Christian. We accept, therefore, what in truth is the façade of his critique of religion—meant to conceal the interior from the eyes of dangerous and endangered readers—as his sincere opinion. We presume, therefore, that his critique of revelation is not so much a critique of revelation itself as a critique, carried out on the ground of belief in revelation, of the theologians' opinions *about* revelation. Consequently, we investigate in the first place his *critique of the tradition on the basis of Scripture* and only afterward his *critique of Scripture itself*; in other words, we first treat his ostensible, and only afterwards his real, opinion about revelation.

## THE CRITIQUE OF THE TRADITION

### a. The Principle of Scripture

At first glance, Hobbes's critique of *religion* presents itself as a critique simply of *theology*. Hobbes wants to achieve the liberation of philosophy from ecclesiastical tutelage, the liberation of men *for* philosophy, not through the destruction of religion but through the pure *separation* of religion and philosophy: Religion is *not* philosophy, but law;<sup>22</sup> the declarations of religion about God do *not* have "the signification of Philosophicall Truth, *but* the signification of Pious intention."<sup>23</sup> Now theology, which one must not

21. Since Hobbes thus advances claims consistent with the tradition with relative frequency, he does not find it difficult, when being attacked because of his dangerous teachings, to appeal to precisely these claims. A series of examples to this effect are found in his countercritique of Bishop Bramhall's critique of *Leviathan*; see, for example, *English Works*, 4:361.

22. *De homine* 14.4. [*Opera Latina*, 2:119–20.]

23. *Leviathan*, chap. 31 (252) and chap. 12 (77–78). Spinoza has the same position; cf. *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, ed. C. H. Bruder (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1843), 14 (20, 33, 38) and 15 (2).

therefore confuse with religion, as commonly happens,<sup>24</sup> rests precisely on the mixture of philosophy and religion;<sup>25</sup> it is the simultaneously comic and gruesome result of the nonsensical attempt to reconcile biblical simplicity with Greek speculation. And it is to be combated not solely because it has reduced philosophy to its handmaiden, whereas religion has in no way interfered with the freedom of philosophy,<sup>26</sup> but also and above all because it, and not so much religion, is the originator of the wars of religion.<sup>27</sup> Hobbes goes further: he purports to lead the struggle against theology, not only in the interest of philosophy and civil peace, but equally in the interest of religion, of piety. He thus combats the philosophy underlying theology not only because it is bad philosophy but also because it is unchristian, pagan.<sup>28</sup> Theology taints even and precisely that religion, the *sincera religio Christi*, which is a simple guide to the right life and to holiness, and which has absolutely nothing to do with scholastic quibbles.<sup>29</sup> To the arbitrary, private opinions of the theologians who concern themselves, suitably, with questions "to trouble us in the performance of Gods commands,"<sup>30</sup> Hobbes opposes the binding teaching of Scripture and the church.<sup>31</sup> And since the church is also exposed to spiritual errors,<sup>32</sup> he appeals, not merely from theology, but also from the church, to Scripture *alone*.

Hobbes turns, therefore, from the tradition to an authority acknowledged by the tradition itself as unconditionally binding. He explicitly adopts the ultimate presuppositions of the tradition as indisputably self-evident.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the belief in the existence and truthfulness of God is self-evident for him;<sup>34</sup> and it is also self-evident for him that one must obey God's commandments more than the commandments of man. What is questionable is "only" how one can know whether a certain command really, or only al-

24. *Behemoth*, 57.

25. *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (463).

26. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (444) and chap. 46 (463).

27. *De corpore*, epistola dedicatoria.

28. *English Works*, 4:426f. and *Leviathan*, Review (491). In justifying this rejection of scholastic theology carried out in the interest of the belief in Scripture, Hobbes appeals explicitly to Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin; see *English Works*, 5:64f.

29. Cf., above all, the beginning and the end of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*Opera Latina*, 5:349 and 408), as well as *English Works*, 4:338.

30. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (444).

31. Cf. *Opera Latina*, 3:569 and 508.

32. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (417f.). Cf. also *English Works*, 4:338.

33. Cf. *Behemoth*, 63.

34. *De cive* 16.4.

legedly, originates from God.<sup>35</sup> That Scripture is the Word of God, however, is self-evident.<sup>36</sup> It follows from this that something can be commanded by God only if it is consistent with Scripture. What criterion is there, however, for judging such statements that allegedly rest on divine authority and that do not indeed oppose the teaching of Scripture, but that still cannot be derived from Scripture itself? Commands of this kind could be certified as divine only by miracles; today, however, there are no more miracles; therefore, for today's Christian, Scripture is not only the primary but even the sole source for knowledge of the commands of God.<sup>37</sup>

The problem of the tradition, set to the side by pointing to the cessation of miracles, recurs at once. The books of Scripture are composed in foreign languages; one therefore needs a translator and an explicator.<sup>38</sup> Who, in case of doubt, should decide which translation and explication ranks as authentic? Who should decide beforehand which books are canonical? It is not enough to respond, the church. For after the division of the church, this answer entails the question, *Which* church? Hobbes answers, the Church of England. But this answer already presupposes the result of the investigation into church politics. For Hobbes submits to the Church of England simply because it is set up as his spiritual authority by that temporal power to which he, as a subject, is obligated in unconditional obedience.<sup>39</sup> Now, the presupposition that one must obey the temporal power unconditionally, even in spiritual questions, cannot, by its essence, be secured on the basis of the reasonable principles of temporal politics, but only on the basis of the revealed principles of Christian politics;<sup>40</sup> the result of the investigation of Scripture, therefore, is presupposed; it cannot be established, prior to the investigation of Scripture, that the Church of England's conception of Scripture should rank as binding. Hobbes, unconcerned with any authorities, and in accordance with his own rational standard, ascertains the teaching of Scripture by deciding which books are canonical, or rather, which translation and explication reproduce the genuine view of Scripture. That this is the case, he himself confirms by openly explaining, on a number of occasions, that the

35. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (260) and chap. 43 (403).

36. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (267f.).

37. *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (268f.), and *English Works*, 4:326f.

38. *De cive* 17.17f.

39. "with submission . . . both in this, and in all questions, whereof the determination dependeth on the Scriptures, to the interpretation of the Bible authorized by the Common-wealth, whose Subject I am." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307).

40. *Leviathan*, chap. 32, beginning, chap. 34, beginning, and chap. 43, end.

interpretations advanced by him are not the usual ones, even though he naturally does not fail to submit to the somewhat different view of the Church of England, i.e., to the temporal power.<sup>41</sup>

Hobbes appeals, therefore, from the tradition to Scripture, which he interprets solely according to his own rational standard, and thus, in this respect, just like any other literary document. There are, however, peculiar principles of interpretation resulting from presupposing the revealed character of Scripture that can have no application to the interpretation of other books. Scripture is neither a vulgar nor a scientific book; hence, the meaning of the words used in Scripture can be ascertained neither from the vulgar nor from the scientific use of speech, but solely from Scripture itself.<sup>42</sup> The advancement of this principle in Hobbes has as its ground, not the interest of a "presuppositionless," historically faithful knowledge of the meaning of the Bible,<sup>43</sup> but the demand, resting on the belief in the revealed character of Scripture, to validate the pure word of God against all human falsifications and fabrications (or rather, the intention to use this demand as a pretext for committing theological opponents to what is to them the inconvenient literal meaning of Scripture). The principle of unconditional submission to the literal meaning of Scripture is at first glance called into question by the thesis, likewise derived from the revealed character of Scripture, that no conflict can occur between Scripture, which is revealed by God, and human reason, which is created by God. But for Hobbes, it in no way follows from this thesis that in the case of an (apparent) contradiction between reason and revelation, Scripture should be interpreted in terms of reason. Scripture is indeed not contrarational, but suprarational; and as a rule there is no other reason for the claim that a passage in Scripture is contrarational in its literal meaning than the deficient willingness of the reader to surrender his understanding to the obedience of belief.<sup>44</sup> The submission to the literal meaning of Scripture is all the more necessary in that Scripture, as follows from the

41. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307 and 311) and Review (489); cf. also *Opera Latina*, 3:517 and 528.

42. "the . . . Signification of words . . . in the Doctrine following, dependeth not (as in naturall science) on the Will of the Writer, nor (as in common conversation) on vulgar use, but on the sense they carry in the Scripture." *Leviathan*, chap. 34, beginning.

43. As is the case in Spinoza; cf. Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 122ff. and 262ff.

44. "though there be many things in Gods Word above Reason; that is to say, which cannot by naturall reason be either demonstrated, or confuted; yet there is nothing contrary to it; but when it seemeth so, the fault is either in unskilfull Interpretation, or erroneous Ratiocination. Therefore, when any thing therein written is too hard for our examination, wee are bidden to

investigation of Scripture itself, wants to teach nothing about the subjects of the sciences;<sup>45</sup> it would, therefore, be completely inappropriate to want to reinterpret Scriptural passages that are not even somewhat in harmony with scientific principles in accordance with those principles.<sup>46</sup> It is different if there is an (apparent) contradiction *within* Scripture; in this case, both, or at least one, of the texts contradicting each other must be interpreted in such a way that the contradiction, or rather the appearance of the contradiction, vanishes.<sup>47</sup>

The interpreter must therefore submit fundamentally, if not even unconditionally, to the literal meaning of Scripture. To the literal meaning of Scripture—this does *not* mean to the meaning of isolated and, in addition, perhaps also dark and ambiguous passages. Rather, he must direct his focus to the leading intention of Scripture as a *whole*, and he must unambiguously account for this intention out of the *clear* passages;<sup>48</sup> out of these passages he can attempt to advance to an understanding also of the darker passages,<sup>49</sup> if he does not want—which, ultimately, is more proper—to leave the meaning of these passages alone in order to lead a Christian life under the guidance of those clear passages that accord with the meaning of Scripture as a whole. For, as to that purpose, Scripture is doubtlessly sufficient.<sup>50</sup>

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captivate our understanding to the Words." *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (256). Cf. also chap. 34 (270 and 278).

45. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (444).

46. Cf., however, the remark: "those texts that seem to countenance the power of Magick, Witchcraft, and Enchantment, must needs have another sense than at first sight [they] seem to bear," which relies on the fact that magic and the like are impossible. *Leviathan*, chap. 37 (304).

47. "You see how great the apparent contradiction is between the . . . texts, which being both Scripture, may and must be reconciled and made to stand together; which unless the rigour of the letter be on one or both sides with intelligible and reasonable interpretations mollified, is impossible." *English Works*, 5:10. Spinoza explicitly rejects this principle of exegesis, which was known to him through the Jewish tradition (see *Tractatus theologico-politicus* 15, §§4ff. ed. Bruder), and proceeds in Hobbes's own terms more radically than Hobbes himself.

48. "in the allegation of Scripture, I have endeavoured to avoid such texts as are of obscure, or controverted Interpretation; and to alledge none, but in such sense as is most plain, and agreeable to the harmony and scope of the whole Bible . . . For it is not the bare Words, but the Scope of the writer that giveth the true light, by which *any* writing is to bee interpreted." *Leviathan*, chap. 43, end. Cf. moreover chap. 43 (407 and 408), chap. 44 (425 and 438–39), and Review (390).

49. Cf. for example the exegesis of 1 Cor. 3:11–12 in chap. 43 (410), in which Hobbes explicitly interprets the difficult part of the passage according to the exegesis of the clear and readily understood part.

50. Cf. *Behemoth*, 55.

## b. Spirits and Angels

Hobbes begins to ascertain the teaching of Scripture with the investigation of the meaning that the word *spirit* has in Scripture. The investigation leads to the following result: The biblical word that is ordinarily translated as "spirit" means in Scripture, when used in its actual sense, either a real, i.e., a corporeal substance of particular subtlety (air, wind, vital spirits, or the like), or an image that the imagination produces in dreams or visions; it never means "spirit or incorporeal substance." The claim that there are spirits therefore has no basis in Scripture. In particular, Scripture teaches nothing about how a man can be possessed by a spirit, unless it is by his own vital spirit, by which his body is naturally moved.<sup>51</sup> In fundamentally the same way, the word *angel* in Scripture means body—whether meant more subtly or more crudely (e.g., men)<sup>52</sup>—or phantasms, insofar as God avails himself of these bodies or phantasms in order to announce his presence or his commands to men; "angels" are principally phantasms that have been brought forth in a supernatural manner. A series of passages in the New Testament certainly extorts from feeble reason the belief that angels exist as substances of a particular kind, naturally as corporeal substances of a particular kind.<sup>53</sup>

51. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (442f.)

52. "Nor in the New Testament is there any place, out of which it can be proved, that Angels (except when they are put for such men, as God hath made the Messengers, and Ministers of his word, or works) are things permanent, and withall incorporeall." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (277).

53. "Concerning the creation of Angels, there is nothing delivered in the Scriptures. That they are Spirits, is often repeated: but by the name of Spirit, is signified both in Scripture, and vulgarly, both amongst Jews, and Gentiles, sometimes thin Bodies; as the Aire, the Wind, the Spirits Vitall, and Animall, of living creatures; and sometimes the Images that rise in the fancy of Dreams, and Visions; which are not reall Substances, nor last any longer than the Dream, or Vision they appear in; which Apparitions, though no reall Substances, but Accidents of the brain; yet when God raiseth them supernaturally, to signifie his Will, they are not improperly termed Gods Messengers, that is to say, his Angels." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (274–75). "By the name of Angel, is signified . . . most often, a Messenger of God: And by a Messenger of God, is signified, any thing that makes known his extraordinary Presence; that is to say, the extraordinary manifestation of his power, especially by a Dream, or Vision." Ibid. "Considering therefore the signification of the word Angel in the Old Testament, and the nature of Dreams and Visions that happen to men by the ordinary way of Nature; I was inclined to this opinion, that Angels were nothing but supernaturall apparitions of the Fancy, raised by the speciall and extraordinary operation of God, thereby to make his presence and commandements known to mankind. . . . But the many places of the New Testament, and our Saviours own words, and in such texts, wherein is no suspicion of corruption of the Scripture, have extorted from my feeble Reason, an acknowledgment and beleef, that there be also Angels substantiall, and permanent. But to beleefe they be . . . Incorporeal, cannot by Scripture bee evinced." Ibid. (278). Cf. also *De cive* 17.28.



Whereas Scripture compels one to acknowledge the existence of angels, the belief in devils is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.<sup>54</sup>

The result of the introductory and foundational investigation of Scripture can be summed up as follows: (1) The critique that consummates this investigation is directed emphatically against spiritualism; appealing to Scripture, Hobbes combats the dualism of corporeal and incorporeal substances within creation;<sup>55</sup> he accepts only the one universe of corporeal substances—apart from these, there is nothing but the world of human imaginings. (2) The denial of the incorporeal in no way means the denial of the supernatural: there are indeed no spirits, but there are miracles and, in particular, phantasms brought forth in a supernatural manner. And besides, the denial of the incorporeal does not mean that there are not corporeal beings whose existence and essence are inaccessible to reason: submitting reason to Scripture, maintaining the principle that while Scripture does not contain a contrarational teaching, it does indeed contain a suprarational teaching, Hobbes acknowledges that there are angels. (3) He does, though, deny the existence of the devil. This denial shows that the struggle against spiritualism is not the only goal of his critique of the tradition; for if he were merely concerned with the critique of spiritualism, one would not see why his teaching regarding the devil is different from that regarding angels, or in other words, why he contests not only the incorporeality but even the existence of the devil. The reason for this deviation is easy to figure out: Hobbes is concerned not solely with the struggle against the belief in spirits but also, in particular, with the struggle against the belief in evil superhuman powers.

### c. The Kingdom of God and Eternal Life

Hobbes construes the expressions “eternal life” and “eternal death,” and therewith all salvational history, in accordance with his foundational critique of spiritualism. He does not disguise the fact that he thereby stands in

54. “[The] significant names, Satan, Devill, Abaddon, set not forth to us any Individuall person, as proper names use to doe; but onely an office, or quality; and are therefore Appellatives; which ought not to have been left untranslated, as they are in the Latine and Modern Bibles; because thereby they seem to be proper names of Daemons; and men are the more easily seduced to beleieve the doctrine of Devills; which at that time was the Religion of the Gentiles, and contrary to that of Moses, and of Christ.” *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (314). Cf. also *English Works*, 4:356f. and 5:210f.

55. Hobbes says explicitly in *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (271), that the result of the investigation regarding the meaning that the word “spirit” has in Scripture does not apply to those passages in which it means that *God* is a spirit.



open opposition to the tradition. But whereas he shows no hesitation whatsoever in contradicting the tradition in his foundational investigation of the meaning of the word *spirit*, in his discussion of the doctrine of eternal life he does not tire of giving the assurance that the explanation advanced is only his private opinion, which, as such, he subordinates to the rather different decree of the ecclesiastical authority.<sup>56</sup> Only in its application to man does the meaning, and hence the suspect character, of the critique of spiritualism come to the fore, the critique that, taken in the abstract, does not at all preclude the existence—although as corporeal substances—of angels. In applying the principal critique of spiritualism to man, Hobbes comes close to unambiguously heretical doctrines; even in this context, and even, therefore, before any discrediting of the authority of Scripture, he is compelled to conceal his view.

Man was created for immortality, for eternal life on *earth*. Through Adam's disobeying God's commandment, man has lost this immortality, and through Jesus Christ's salvational act, all who believe in Jesus as the Christ regain this immortality—eternal life on *earth*, *not* in heaven.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, what is to be understood as the "Kingdom of God" is not, as the theologians ordinarily claim, "Eternall felicity, after this life, in the Highest Heaven," or an unearthly, supernal bliss, but "a Kingdome properly so named," which comes about through God's making a contract with men of such a kind that the men in question promise obedience to the commandments of God, while God promises these men an *earthly* reward for their obedience. God thus promised Adam eternal life on earth, the Patriarchs and the Israelites under Moses possession of the land of Canaan, and the elect, who believe in Jesus as the Christ, in turn eternal life on earth.<sup>58</sup> Now, because the covenant made with Adam became instantly null and void through Adam's disobedience, the

56. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307, 311, and 314).

57. "it seemeth to me, . . . that Adam if he had not sinned, had had an Eternall Life on Earth." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (307). "For if as in Adam, all die, that is, have forfeited Paradise, and Eternall Life on Earth, even so in Christ all shall bee made alive; then all men shall be made to live on Earth; for else the comparison were not proper." Ibid. (308). "That the place wherein men are to live Eternally, after the Resurrection, is the Heavens . . . is not easily to be drawn from any text that I can find." Ibid. (309).

58. "I find the Kingdome of God, to signifie in most places of Scripture, a Kingdome properly so named, constituted by the Votes of the People of Israel in peculiar manner; wherein they chose God for their King by Covenant made with him, upon Gods promising them the possession of the land of Canaan." *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (280). Regarding Abraham, see *ibid.*, as well as *Leviathan*, chap. 40, beginning; regarding Adam and the Christian promise, see the previous note.

history of the kingdom of God actually begins first with Abraham, or rather first with Moses.<sup>59</sup> The kingdom of God, which takes its beginning from the contract at Sinai, is a real, civil commonwealth in which God rules on *earth* by means of his earthly lieutenants (first Moses, then the high priest), and the purpose of which is the proper earthly purpose of all commonwealths and, in addition, the particular earthly reward likewise promised by God.<sup>60</sup> This kingdom of God comes to an end with the rebellion of the Israelites against it and the election of Saul. But God promises, through the prophets, that this, his kingdom, will be restored through Christ: this kingdom, beginning with the second coming of Christ, is also an *earthly* kingdom;<sup>61</sup> Christ will govern in his *human* nature,<sup>62</sup> and he himself will not be actually king but rather a subordinate lieutenant to God the King, just as Moses and the high priests were lieutenants to God the King.<sup>63</sup> And as "salvation" in Scripture altogether means deliverance from temporal, *earthly* enemies, so the general salvation with which the kingdom of God will ultimately begin is a salvation through triumph, therefore through victory, and therefore through battle, "which cannot well be supposed, shall be in heaven," a deliverance on earth from earthly enemies of the earthly kingdom of God.<sup>64</sup>

But at his second coming Christ not only has the office of wielding the kingship of God in the name of God, and therefore the task of restoring the earthly kingdom of God that had been destroyed through the election of Saul; it behooves him at the same time to restore mankind to its original

59. Cf. *De cive* 16.2; *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (281) and chap. 40, beginning.

60. "by the Kingdome of God, is properly meant a Common-wealth, instituted . . . for their Civill Government, and the regulating of their behaviour, not onely towards other Nations both in peace and warre; which properly was a Kingdome, wherein God was King, and the High priest was to be (after the death of Moses) his sole Viceroy, or Lieutenant." *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (282). "The Kingdome . . . of God, is a reall, not a metaphoricall Kingdome." *Ibid.* (283). Cf. also n. 58 above.

61. "In short, the Kingdome of God is a Civill Kingdome; . . . which Kingdome having been cast off, in the election of Saul, the Prophets foretold, should be restored by Christ; and the Restauration whereof we daily pray for, when we say in the Lords Prayer, Thy Kingdome come . . . the Kingdome of God (called also the Kingdome of Heaven, from the gloriousnesse, and admirable height of that throne) [is] a Kingdome which God by his Lieutenants, or Vicars, who deliver his Commandements to the people, did exercise on Earth." *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (284).

62. "it is evident, that our Saviours Kingdome is to bee exercised by him in his humane nature." *Leviathan*, chap. 41 (336).

63. "Seeing therefore the authority of Moses was but subordinate, and hee but a Lieutenant to God; it followeth, that Christ, whose authority, as man, was to bee like that of Moses, was no more but subordinate to the authority of his Father." *Leviathan*, chap. 41 (338). Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 41, beginning and end.

64. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (316f.).

state forfeited by Adam's sin.<sup>65</sup> His death upon the cross, expiating the sin of Adam (and of all men in Adam), is the condition for the salvation of mankind. The consequences of sin are death and misery; the deliverance from sin must therefore entail the deliverance from death and misery. In fact, in Scripture, forgiveness of sin and salvation from death and misery are identical. The salvation that the elect will be granted at the end of days, absolute salvation, is therefore salvation from all *earthly* evils and the restoration of complete *earthly* happiness, of an earthly life without want and death.<sup>66</sup>

The sin of Adam and the salvational act of Christ correspond to each other also in *this* respect; that just as the sin of Adam had only the condemnation to death, not death itself, as an immediate consequence, redemption too has only absolution from death, not eternal life, as an immediate consequence. Eternal life begins only with the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment.<sup>67</sup> But where do the *souls* of the departed reside until the Day of Judgment? One must here respond that Scripture nowhere at all teaches that man's soul is immortal, that it can exist independent of the body; "soul" and "life" are identical for Scripture; the word *soul* means in Scripture "living body," never an incorporeal substance. One can therefore speak only of the immortality of *man* as a living body. It is precisely for this reason that immortality does not belong to the nature of man; it comes to him, rather, only through the free will, the grace, the promise of God: man is by nature mortal; he was created mortal, and he obtains immortality only through the fulfillment of a condition, namely, in the event of his obedience or his belief. When man dies, nothing other than his corpse remains; there is no life between natural death and the miraculous resurrection. God,

65. *Leviathan*, chap. 41, beginning.

66. "The joyes of life Eternall, are in Scripture comprehended all under the name of *Salvation*, or being saved. To be saved, is to be secured, either respectively, against speciall Evills, or absolutely, against all Evill, comprehending Want, Sicknesse, and Death it self . . . to be saved from Sin, is to be saved from all the Evill and Calamities that Sinne hath brought upon us. And therefore in the Holy Scripture, Remission of Sinne, and Salvation from Death and Misery, is the same thing . . . And it is besides evident in reason, that since Death and Misery, were the punishments of Sin, the discharge of Sinne, must also be a discharge of Death and Misery; that is to say, Salvation absolute, such as the faithfull are to enjoy after the day of Judgment, by the power and favour of Jesus Christ, who for that cause is called our Saviour." *Leviathan* chap. 38 (315f.).

67. "The comparison between that Eternall Life which Adam lost, and our Saviour by his Victory over death hath recovered; holdeth also in this, that as Adam lost Eternal Life by his sin, and yet lived after it for a time; so the faithful Christian hath recovered Eternal Life by Christs passion, though he die a natural death, and remaine dead for a time; namely, till the Resurrection." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (309).

who had the power to form man out of inanimate matter, can also restore man's corpse to an immortal, spiritual matter, thus raising man to an angelic condition.<sup>68</sup>

As the kingdom of God and eternal life have their place on earth, so too do hell and eternal death. The indications in Scripture about hell are all either indeterminate or metaphorical.<sup>69</sup> In order to ascertain the real facts, which are circumscribed by metaphors, Hobbes deems it necessary to investigate what Scripture teaches about the nature of biblical torment and the tormentors. As for the tormentors, the "enemy" or "Satan," he and his kingdom are on earth: by "Satan" is to be understood nothing other than some *earthly* enemy of the kingdom of God, just as in the time before the election of Saul, when the kingdom of God was in Palestine, and the kingdoms of the enemy were the peoples all around.<sup>70</sup> But in what, then, does the torment

68. "our Saviour intended to prove, . . . the Resurrection of the Body, that is to say, the Immortality of the Man [i.e., and not the Immortality of the Soul]. Therefore our Saviour meaneth, that [the] Patriarchs were Immortall; not by a property consequent to the essence, and nature of mankind; but by the will of God, that was pleased of his mere grace, to bestow Eternall life upon the faithfull . . . That the soul of man is in its own nature eternall, and a living Creature independent of the body; or that any meer man is Immortall, otherwise than by the Resurrection in the last day, (except Enos and Elias) is a doctrine not apparent in Scripture. The whole 14. Chapter of Job . . . is a complaint of this Mortality of Nature; and yet no contradiction of the Immortality at the Resurrection . . . the Immortall Life (and Soule and Life in the Scripture, do usually signifie the same thing) . . . hath for cause, not his specificall nature, and generation; but the Promise." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (310 f.). "we read plainly in holy Scripture, that God created Adam in an estate of Living for Ever; which was conditionall, that is to say, if he disobeyed not his Commandement; which was not essentiall to Human Nature." *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (424). "The Soule in Scripture, signifieth alwaies, either the Life, or the Living Creature; and the Body and Soule jointly, the Body alive." *Ibid.* (425). "The Elect are . . . the sole heirs of Eternall Life: they only can die no more: it is they that are equall to the Angels." *Ibid.* (433). "God, that could give life to a peece of clay, hath the same power to give life again to a dead man, and renew his inanimate, and rotten Carkasse, into a glorious, spirituall, and immortall Body." *Ibid.* (436). Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, Latin Appendix, chap. 1 (*Opera Latina*, 3:520–27), as well as *English Works*, 4:350–54.

69. "As the Kingdome of God, and Eternal Life, so also Gods Enemies, and their Torments after Judgment, appear by the Scripture, to have their place on Earth . . . for the place of the damned after the Resurrection, it is not determined, neither in the Old, nor New Testament, by any note of situation." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (311). "that which is thus [i.e., in the Scripture] said concerning Hell Fire, is spoken metaphorically." *Ibid.* (314). Cf. also *Opera Latina*, 3:518.

70. "if the Kingdome of God after the Resurrection, bee upon the Earth, . . . The Enemy, and his Kingdome must be on Earth also. For so also was it, in the time before the Jews had deposed God. For Gods Kingdome was in Palestine; and the Nations round about, were the Kingdomes of the Enemy; and consequently by Satan, is meant any Earthly Enemy of the Church." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (314).

of hell consist? From Hobbes's convoluted explanations, all that emerges is that he denies the eternity of punishment in hell.<sup>71</sup> Only in a much later passage in *Leviathan* do we receive any clear information: just as the elect will live after the resurrection in spiritual bodies without marrying, eating, and drinking, as well as without ever dying, so the damned will live after the resurrection in crude and corruptible bodies like the men alive now, and will consequently eat, drink, beget children, and then die yet again, the second death;<sup>72</sup> the punishment of the damned consists in the "grief, and discontent of mind, from the sight of that Eternal felicity in others, which they themselves through their own incredulity, and disobedience have lost."<sup>73</sup> But since the damned surely die again after the resurrection, this suffering is only finite.

We sum up again: (1) Because there are no spirits, no incorporeal substances, there are, in particular, also no human souls independent of the body, no souls immortal by their nature that would be capable of eternal happiness and eternal anguish; with the dualism of spirit and body, the dualism of heaven (or hell) and earth falls apart. (2) But as the negation of the dualism within created substances does not entail the negation of the dualism of God and creation, and therefore—in principle—miracles are possible, so too there may indeed be no spirits, but there are particular, miraculous works of God, and there may be no kingdom of God as a realm of spirits, but there is a kingdom of God, which God has established in miraculous ways as a dominion over a particular group of men; and as the fact that there are no spirits does not preclude corporeal angels, so the fact that there is no immortality of the soul does not preclude a resurrection of the body, a second earthly life in miraculous, spiritual bodies. That these possibilities—angels, eternal life, God's particular providence, miracles—have really come into be-

71. "though there be many places that affirm Everlasting Fire, and Torments . . . yet I find none that affirm there shall bee an Eternall Life therein of any individuall person; but to the contrary, an Everlasting Death, which is the Second Death . . . Whereby it is evident, that there is to bee a Second Death of every one that shall bee condemned at the day of Judgement, after which hee shall die no more." *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (315).

72. "as the Elect after the Resurrection shall be restored to the estate, wherein Adam was before he had sinned; so the Reprobate shall be in the estate, that Adam, and his posterity were in after the sin committed." *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (432). "the wicked being left in the estate they were in after Adams sin, may at the Resurrection live as they did, marry, and give in marriage, and have grosse and corruptible bodies, as all mankind now have; and consequently may engender perpetually, after the Resurrection, as they did before: For there is no place of Scripture to the contrary." *Ibid.* (432f.).

73. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (314).



ing, however, we cannot know through reason, but only through Scripture.<sup>74</sup>  
(3) Even if there is an eternal happiness, there is no eternal agony, no hell.

#### **d. Temporal and Spiritual Power**

There are no immaterial substances, therefore no human souls independent of their bodies, therefore no eternal happiness in heaven and no eternal suffering in hell; rather, there are only corporeal substances, only earthly life, earthly happiness, and earthly suffering; there is, therefore, no dualism of a heavenly and an earthly state and thus of a spiritual and temporal power. The denial of the dualism of substances entails the denial of the dualism of powers.

It is not to be doubted that in denying incorporeal substances Hobbes meant to deal a deadly blow to the doctrine of the “spiritualists,”<sup>75</sup> i.e., to the adherents of the spiritual power independent of the state. But it is likewise not to be doubted that it was fully clear to Hobbes that the denial of spirits, taken by itself, would not suffice to secure the absolute unity of the civil power, that is, the absolute exclusion of a spiritual power. For since Hobbes has to carry out his critique of spiritualism on the basis of Scripture, he has to acknowledge the dualism of God and creation as Scripture understands it, and therefore the possibility of *miracles*. It is precisely for this reason that he acknowledges that a contradiction between the commands of God and the commands of the temporal power is possible. For if God can intervene in natural events through miracles in general, he can intervene miraculously in natural, human commonwealths in particular by miraculously, through revelation, giving men commands that in some circumstances contradict the commands of the human sovereign,<sup>76</sup> even if they do not have the deposition or killing of the human sovereign as their object. The unity of the civil power is therefore threatened just as much, indeed even more, by the possibility of miracles as by spiritualism.

But insofar as he did not openly want to renounce his belief in Scripture, Hobbes could not exclude this possibility. In these circumstances there remained no other choice for him than either to show that God never makes

74. Cf. *De cive* 17.13 and 17.28.

75. *Leviathan*, chap. 39 (322).

76. “they who have no supernaturall Revelation to the contrary, ought to obey the laws of their own Sovereign.” *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (323). “God is the Sovereign of all Sovereigns; and therefore, when he speaks to any Subject, he ought to obeyed, whatsoever any earthly Potentate command to the contrary.” *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (260).

use of his miraculous power in a manner harmful to the absolute sovereignty of the temporal power, or in case God had in fact ever interfered with the prerogative of the human authority, to show that these precedents have no current significance. He had already developed the critique of spiritualism in accordance with this theoretical acknowledgment in principle, and specific practical disabling, of the belief in miracles. *On the one hand*, he was prevented from expressing the critique of spiritualism in its most radical, least ambiguous form by the compulsion to acknowledge the possibility of miracles: he had to content himself with denying the existence of spirits; he could not deny the existence of spiritual bodies; in other words, he had to replace spirits with beings with miraculous bodies. Accordingly, he could indeed teach that the kingdom of God was not a realm of spirits but an earthly commonwealth, but he had to admit not only that God governs over beings with natural, perishable bodies (as in the Old Covenant) but that God's reign is, or rather will be, over beings with miraculous, imperishable bodies as well. *On the other hand*, however, through this (theoretically so unsatisfying) "correction" of the traditional view, Hobbes achieved *almost* everything he needed for his practical purpose, the securing of absolute unity for the civil power. For if there are no incorporeal substances, and there is, therefore, no soul independent of the body, God can govern only over corporeal beings, and his kingdom must be an earthly kingdom. Now God governs either over men with natural bodies, as in the time of the Old Covenant (and this kingdom of God has been destroyed since the election of Saul) or over men with miraculous bodies (and this kingdom of God begins only with the resurrection of the dead). There is in the present age of the world, therefore, no kingdom of God, no authority other than the temporal, the human. The miraculous kingdom of God has no current significance at all.<sup>77</sup>

Through his critique of spiritualism, which does not call into question the possibility of miracles, Hobbes achieves *almost* everything he needs for his purpose, and therefore *not* everything. Because this critique does not exclude the possibility of miracles, it has holes in it that can be filled in only by a special investigation. From the possibility of miracles follows immediately the possibility that God can interfere in a miraculous manner in human commonwealths. This difficulty is not yet disposed of with the remark that the earthly kingdom of God has been destroyed with the election of Saul. For

77. Speaking, in particular, of the conduct of Samuel and David toward Saul, Hobbes says: "all these transactions are supernatural, and oblige not to imitation. Is there any priest now, that can set up in England, Scotland, or Ireland, another king by pretence of prophecy or religion?" *English Works*, 4:331.

even though this election was indeed later consented to by God, it originally occurred against God's will, and besides, because Saul disobeyed God's commandment, Saul's kingdom was replaced straightaway, through divine dispensation, by the kingdom of David. Is it not, therefore, according to God's revealed will that one obey the leaders appointed by God himself rather than the possessors of earthly power? Do not the earthly deputies of God have a higher authority than merely human powers? One cannot say that since the decline of the earthly kingdom of God and before the resurrection, this question has no current significance. For the believers live in expectation of the future kingdom of heaven, and this faithfully expected kingdom already casts its light or its shadows on the present. Let us, therefore, consult the history of the kingdom of God!

This history begins with Abraham. Even before he entered into the covenant with God, Abraham was the sovereign master of his family. He therefore owes his sovereignty, not to the covenant with God, but to a purely human relationship. This sovereignty, which was not created by the covenant with God, was also not modified by this covenant. For God enters into the covenant only with Abraham himself, he speaks only with Abraham himself; the subjects, just as before the covenant, must obey only the commandments of Abraham: even the commandments of God reach them only in the form of commandments of Abraham; they have no right to invoke God's will against Abraham.<sup>78</sup> The same goes for God's covenant with Isaac and Jacob.<sup>79</sup> Even the sovereignty of Moses did not rest on a commandment of God; it had, rather, a purely human origin: it rested on the consent of the people.<sup>80</sup> God's covenant with Moses established, not indeed an ordinary, but a priestly kingdom, which means, however, a kingdom that, after Moses' death, was to be hereditary in the family of the high priest.<sup>81</sup> In Moses'

78. "In this Contract of God with Abraham, wee may observe . . . , that at the making of this Covenant, God spake onely to Abraham, and therefore contracted not with any of his family, or seed, otherwise then as their wills . . . were before the Contract involved in the will of Abraham; who was therefore supposed to have had a lawfull power, to make them perform all that he covenanted for them . . . they to whom God hath not spoken immediately, are to receive the positive commandements of God from their Sovereign; as the family and seed of Abraham their Father, [and] Lord, and Civill Sovereign. . . . God spake onely to Abraham; and it was he onely, that was able to know what God said, and to interpret the same to his family." *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (323f.).

79. *Ibid.* (324).

80. "[Moses'] authority . . . , as the authority of all other Princes, must be grounded on the Consent of the People, and their Promise to obey him." *Ibid.* (324).

81. "the Covenant constituteth a Sacerdotall Kingdome, that is to say, a Kingdome hereditary to Aaron . . . , after Moses should bee dead." *Ibid.* (325).



lifetime, all power—temporal as well as spiritual—was to be concentrated in the hands of Moses (thus, of the temporal sovereign); God spoke to the people only through Moses; no prophecy other than that legitimated by Moses was allowed.<sup>82</sup> In like manner, after Moses' death, all power was concentrated in the hands of the high priest. This constitution remained in force until the election (permitted by God) of Saul; from this time on all power lay in the hands of the kings.<sup>83</sup> Thus, in all epochs of the Old Covenant, all power was concentrated in *one* man's hands,<sup>84</sup> and indeed, as has been shown, in the hands of a sovereign who owed his sovereignty, not to the miraculous interventions of God, but to purely human relationships.

This argument, however, still does not sufficiently secure the unity of the civil power. For even if all sovereignty was of human provenance in the time of the Old Covenant, the office of Christ certainly rests on direct, divine appointment. And since Christ was supposed to restore the kingdom of God that had been destroyed by the election of Saul, and since all power in that kingdom was concentrated in the hands of the high priest, it is to be expected that in the Christian age, there will be a priestly, spiritual power resting at last on direct divine appointment. Now, it has indeed been shown that the kingdom of Christ begins only with the general resurrection. But while he sojourned on earth, Christ already exercised an authority resting on divine appointment, and it is a question whether this authority is not the origin of a spiritual institution, the church, which is independent of the temporal power, and which may even be its superior. The investigation of Scripture, though, leads to the conclusion that Christ while he sojourned on earth did not interfere at all with the right of the temporal power: he left all princes in full possession of their lawful authority. He did no more than announce his kingdom of the last day and teach the conditions for entrance into this kingdom. Since, therefore, Christ had no kingly power in this world, his ministers have even less. And as Christ was not king on earth, but a teacher, his ministers cannot win obedience by coercion or punishment, but only by

82. "Moses alone had next under God the sovereignty over the Israelites: And that not onely in causes of Civill Policy, but also of Religion: For Moses onely spake with God, and therefore onely could tell the People, what it was that God required at their hands . . . There was no Prophet in the time of Moses, nor pretender to the Spirit of God, but such as Moses had approved and Authorized." Ibid. (326). Spinoza has the same position; see *Tractatus theologico-politicus* 18 (Bruder §§36–38).

83. *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (327ff.).

84. "we may conclude, that whosoever had the Sovereignty of the Common-wealth amongst the Jews, the same had also the Supreme Authority in matter of Gods externall worship; and represented Gods Person." Ibid. (331).

persuasion. Christ did not himself exercise a power to command, nor did he confer on his apostles and disciples any power to command, any authority over the community.<sup>85</sup> Since the members of the spirituality are essentially only teachers, they can indeed abandon their disciples, in case these refuse to be taught, but they cannot say that the disciples did them injustice, since these are not obligated to obey them.<sup>86</sup> And they do not even have this authorization to abandon their disciples with respect to their sovereign, who, as their master, can command of them what he wants.<sup>87</sup>

A spiritual power—if by power is understood the authorization to command and to coerce—is therefore out of the question; the members of the spirituality essentially have only the authorization to teach. But is not this office of teaching at least independent of the temporal power? Only those teachers whom Christ himself had appointed were independent of the temporal power; in the following age all members of the spirituality owed their authority to teach to election by the community, by the church. In this election, even the apostles had only technical leadership; mainly they pronounced those officers who had been elected by the community elected.<sup>88</sup> The ecclesiastical officers have no rights at all belonging to them by virtue

85. "there are two parts of our Saviours Office during his aboad upon the Earth: one to Proclaim himself the Christ; and another by Teaching, and by working of Miracles, to perswade, and to prepare men to live so, as to be worthy of the Immortality Beleevers were to enjoy, at such time as he should come in majesty, to take possession of his Fathers Kingdome." *Leviathan*, chap. 41 (334f.). "the Kingdome of Christ is not of this world: therefore neither can his Ministers (unless they be Kings), require obedience in his name." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (341). "It is therefore manifest, that Christ hath not left to his Ministers in this world, unless they be also endued with Civill Authority, any Authority to Command other men." *Ibid.* (343).

86. "the Power of Excommunication cannot be extended moreover than to the end for which the Apostles and Pastors of the Church have their Commission from our Saviour; which is not to rule by Command and Coaction, but by Teaching and Direction of men in the way of Salvation in the world to come. And as a master in any Science, may abandon his Scholar, when hee obstinately neglecteth the practise of his rules; but not accuse him of Injustice, because he was never bound to obey him: so a Teacher of Christian doctrine may abandon his Disciples that obstinately continue in an unchristian life; but he cannot say, they doe him wrong, because they are not obliged to obey him." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (353).

87. *Ibid.* (352).

88. "the Apostles . . . were at first but twelve; and these were chosen and constituted by our Saviour himselfe." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (363). "As the Apostles, Matthias, Paul, and Barnabas, were not made by our Saviour himself, but were elected by the Church, that is, by the Assembly of Christians; . . . so were also the Presbyters, and Pastors . . . elected by the Churches." *Ibid.* (355f.). "It was therefore the Assembly that elected their own Elders: the Apostles were onely Presidents of the Assembly to call them together for such Election, and to pronounce them Elected, and to give them the benediction, which now is called Consecration." *Ibid.* (366).

of divine appointment, and in particular no right to any earnings: as regards their livelihood, they are entirely dependent on their own wealth, their own work, and the voluntary gifts of pious and grateful Christians.<sup>89</sup> The members of the spirituality are nothing but the servants of the community. But does not the community have any authorizations independent of the state? Are not the rights of the temporal power in some way limited by the church, or at least with respect to the church? Since the temporal sovereigns were at the same time the spiritual shepherds of their peoples in pagan commonwealths, the Christian sovereigns must also be spiritual shepherds, i.e., be authorized to preach and to teach, as well as to appoint preachers and teachers at their will, Christ never having ordered that kings should lose any of their absolute power because of their belief in Christ; it depends in particular on their will whether they wish to confer the spiritual direction of their subjects on the pope or on a local church council of whatever sort; and the Christian sovereigns have not only the right to preach and to teach but also the right to perform all other church functions, i.e., to baptize, to administer the holy Communion, etc.<sup>90</sup> The unity of the civil power, therefore, does not experience the slightest restriction as a result of the fact that there is one church.

But what if the king is an unbeliever and nevertheless interferes in any way with the church, claiming for himself church functions or things of this sort? In principle, are there not any revealed commands of God that must be respected in all circumstances, that must therefore be obeyed in some circumstance in opposition to the command of the temporal power? If, in every commonwealth, all who have no revealed command to the contrary are obligated to obey the laws of the temporal power, the possibility remains that the men to whom a revelation has been given, that *prophets* under cer-

89. Ibid. (371).

90. "This Right of the Heathen Kings, cannot bee thought taken from them by their conversion to the Faith of Christ; who never ordained, that Kings for beleieving in him, should be deposed, that is, subjected to any but himselfe, . . . therefore Christian Kings are still the Supreme Pastors of their people, and have power to ordain what Pastors they please, to teach the Church." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (372). "Christian Kings have power to Baptize, and to Consecrate." Ibid. (374). "If they please therefore, they may (as many Christian Kings now doe) commit the government of their Subjects in matters of Religion to the Pope; but then the Pope is in that point Subordinate to them, and exerciseth that Charge in anothers Dominion *Jure Civili* . . . , not *Jure Divino* . . . ; and may therefore be discharged of that Office, when the Sovereign for the good of his Subjects shall think it necessary. They may also if they please, commit the care of Religion to one Supreme Pastor, or to an Assembly of Pastors; and give them what power over the Church, or over one another, they think most convenient; and what titles of honor, as of Bishops, Archbishops, Priests, or Presbyters, they will." Ibid. (378).

tain circumstances, may contravene the laws of the temporal power, or may call for resistance to those laws. What criterion determines whether a man should rank as a prophet? How can a man to whom God has not proclaimed his will through revelation know that another who purports to preach God's word is a prophet? A prophet must fulfill two conditions: he must work miracles, and he may not teach anything that contradicts Scripture.<sup>91</sup> In order to answer the question whether under certain circumstances a prophet sent by God can act against the commands of the temporal sovereign, or rather, can invoke disobedience against those commands, it suffices to answer the question whether Scripture allows disobedience against the temporal power under any circumstances. Fundamentally, it is clear that in case of a conflict between a divine and a human command, a man should obey the command of God.<sup>92</sup> Only those commands of God, however, are absolutely binding whose transgression entails eternal damnation, and whose fulfillment entails eternal happiness as a consequence.<sup>93</sup> One must therefore clarify what, according to Scripture, is really necessary for salvation. Everything that is necessary for salvation is contained in the two virtues of believing in Christ and obeying the laws. The obedience necessary for salvation, therefore, is nothing other than the obedience to the laws of the temporal power; for the obedience that God demands from us is the serious effort to observe the laws of nature and the laws of the temporal power; obedience to the laws of nature, however, coincides in practice with obedience to the civil laws since the principal law of nature is the command to obey the temporal power.<sup>94</sup> If we men were capable of completely observing only the obligation to this obedience, we would obtain salvation through precisely this obedience. But because we are all sinners, in addition to this obedience we need also and above all forgiveness of sins; but the forgiveness of sins is granted to us as a

91. See above, p. 35.

92. See above, pp. 34f.

93. "if the command of the Civill Sovereign bee such, as that it may be obeyed, without the forfeiture of life Eternall; not to obey it is unjust . . . But if the command be such, as cannot be obeyed, without being damned to Eternall Death, then . . . the Counsell of our Saviour takes place, Fear not those that kill the body, but cannot kill the soule." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (403).

94. "The Obedience required at our hands by God, . . . is a serious Endeavour to Obey him . . . But what Commandements are those that God hath given us? . . . our Saviour Christ hath not given us new Laws, but Counsell to observe those wee are subject to; that is to say, the Laws of Nature, and the Laws of our severall Sovereigns . . . The Laws of God therefore are none but the Laws of Nature, whereof the principall is . . . a commandement to obey our Civill Sovereigns." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (404).

reward for our belief in Christ.<sup>95</sup> The belief required by Scripture as necessary for salvation is only the belief that Jesus is the Christ.<sup>96</sup> After clarifying, therefore, what is necessary for salvation, it is not difficult to bring obedience to God and obedience to the temporal power into complete agreement. For if the sovereign is a Christian, then as a Christian he allows the belief, necessary for salvation, that Jesus is the Christ; and as a sovereign he commands obedience to his own laws, i.e., the only obedience necessary for salvation.<sup>97</sup> If the sovereign is an unbeliever, in this case too every insubordinate subject sins against the laws of God. How, therefore, should the Christian behave if the unbelieving sovereign forbids the belief in Christ that is necessary for salvation? The answer to this is that human commands have no influence on belief: belief is a gift of God, which man can neither give nor take away. The unbelieving sovereign can forbid, not the belief in Christ, but the profession of this belief. A profession with the tongue, however, is a purely external action, in respect of which the Christian, if only he holds firmly in his heart to belief in Christ, may obey every command of the temporal power; he does not need to put himself in danger of life and limb on account of professing with the tongue. The denial of Christ, to which he is forced by a command of his authority, is to be accounted as a fault not against him but against the authority. There is therefore not only no right to resistance, there is not even an obligation to martyrdom. For martyrs, in the genuine sense of the word, are only witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, i.e., such men as have seen Jesus on earth and after the resurrection. Whoever is not explicitly sent to proclaim the belief in Jesus as the Christ is not obligated to suffer death for that belief; if he exposes himself to this danger nevertheless, he may neither complain about his temporal sovereign, who condemns him to death, nor marvel if the heavenly reward is not granted him for an action with which he was not charged.<sup>98</sup> There are therefore no limits set by revelation to the

95. "because wee are all guilty of disobedience to Gods law, . . . there is required at our hands now, not onely Obedience for the rest of our time, but also a Remission of sins for the time past; which Remission is the reward of our Faith in Christ." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (403).

96. "The (Unum Necessarium) Onely Article of Faith, which the Scripture maketh simply Necessary to Salvation, is this, that Jesus is the Christ." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (407).

97. "If he [i.e., the Civill Sovereign] bee a Christian, he alloweth the beleefe of this Article, that Jesus is the Christ; . . . And because he is a Sovereign, he requireth Obedience to all his owne, that is, to all the Civill Laws; in which also are contained all the Laws of Nature, that is, all the Laws of God." *Ibid.* (413).

98. "And when the Civill Sovereign is an Infidel, every one of his own Subjects that resisteth him, sinneth against the Laws of God . . . And for their Faith, it is internall, and invisible; They



obligation to obey the temporal power. And with this the unity of the ruling power is secured unconditionally.

### e. The Kingdom of Darkness

By ascertaining the teaching of Scripture, Hobbes claims to have proven that the dualism of powers, in particular, and the dualism of substances, more generally, have no basis in Scripture and are even contrary to Scripture. Since metaphysical and political dualism, therefore, is not justified by Scripture, is even adverse to Scripture, where does it come from? What are its historical roots? By whom was it brought into the church? What is its human origin? Hobbes answers these questions systematically in the fourth part of *Leviathan*, which is entitled “The Kingdome of Darknesse.”

The kingdom of darkness is opposed to the kingdom of God. Its ruler is Satan or the enemy; its subjects are demons, i.e., specters, which are also called “children of darkness.” Even the kingdom of the enemy is an earthly kingdom; furthermore, by “Satan” or “enemy” is to be understood, not an individual person, but only an office or a quality;<sup>99</sup> and finally, demons are not real but only products of human imagination.<sup>100</sup> Hence, the kingdom of darkness is “nothing else but a Confederacy of Deceivers, that to obtain dominion over men in this present world, endeavour by dark, and erroneous

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have the licence that Naaman had, and need not put themselves into danger for it.” *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (414). “But what (may some object) if a King, or a Senate, or other Sovereign Person forbid us to believe in Christ? To this, I answer, that such Forbidding is of no effect; because Beleeve, and Unbeleefe never follows mens Commands. Faith is a gift of God, which Man can neither give, nor take away by promise of rewards, or menaces of torture. And if it be moreover asked, What if wee bee commanded by our lawfull Prince, to say with our tongue, wee beleeve not; must we obey such a command? Profession with the tongue is but an externall thing, and no more then any other gesture whereby we signifie our obedience; and wherein a Christian, holding firmly in his heart the Faith of Christ, hath the same liberty which the Prophet Elisha allowed to Naaman the Syrian. . . . whatsoever a subject . . . is compelled to in obedience to his Sovereign, and doth it not in order to his own mind, but in order to the laws of his country, that action is not his, but his Sovereigns.” *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (343f.). “he that is not sent to preach this fundamentall article, but taketh it upon him of his private authority, though he be a Witnesse, and consequently a Martyr . . . , yet he is not obliged to suffer death for that cause; because being not called thereto, tis not required at his hands; nor ought hee to complain, if he loseth the reward he expecteth from those that never set him on work.” Ibid. (345).

99. See above, pp. 38f. and p. 43.

100. “Daemons . . . are but Idols, or Phantasms of the braine, without any reall nature of their own, distinct from humane fancy.” *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (418).

Doctrines to extinguish in them the Light, both by Nature, and of the Gospel; and so to dis-prepare them for the Kingdome of God to come.”<sup>101</sup>

The “Enemy,” thus a confederacy of earthly deceivers, is, however, none other than, above all, the Roman and then the Presbyterian *clergy*.<sup>102</sup> The clergy, therefore, attempt to gain dominion over men by spreading false doctrines. The general character of these false doctrines has already been determined in the present study: these false doctrines are essentially dualistic. By inquiring, therefore, into the sources of the false doctrines spread by “the Enemy,” Hobbes inquires, ipso facto, into the sources of metaphysical as well as political dualism.

The false doctrines in question have four different sources: (1) the distorted interpretation of Scripture, (2) the demonology of the pagan poets, (3) Greek religion and philosophy, and (4) false and untrustworthy traditions.<sup>103</sup> If one considers that Hobbes does not attach particular value to the source of false doctrines named last,<sup>104</sup> and furthermore, that by the pagan poets whose demonology has been introduced into the church, he understands principally the Greek poets,<sup>105</sup> one receives the following more general division of the sources of the false doctrines: these false doctrines derive partly from the (misunderstood) Scriptures, partly from Hellenism (or rather, from paganism generally).

Hobbes traces the misunderstanding of Scripture back to “three generall Errors”:<sup>106</sup> “The greatest, and main abuse of Scripture, and to which almost all the rest are either consequent, or subservient, is the wresting of it, to prove that the Kingdome of God . . . is the present Church.”<sup>107</sup> “A second generall abuse of Scripture, is the turning of Consecration into Conjuraton, or Enchantment.”<sup>108</sup> “Another generall Error, is from the Misinterpretation of the words Eternall Life, Everlasting Death, and the Second Death,”<sup>109</sup> namely, from the apprehension that these words might refer to an incorporeal soul, and therefore one by nature immortal. Now, both the belief in magic and

101. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (417–18).

102. “we may justly pronounce for the Authors of all this Spirituall Darknesse, the Pope, and Roman Clergy.” *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (478). “The Authors therefore of this Darknesse in Religion, are the Romane, and the Presbyterian Clergy.” *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (476).

103. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (418).

104. He devotes to it a single paragraph; cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (473).

105. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (441) and chap. 12 (79ff.).

106. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (426).

107. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (419).

108. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (422).

109. *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (424).

the belief in incorporeal souls, in spirits or specters, were doubtlessly first brought about, not by the misinterpretation of Scripture, but by the common heritage of paganism throughout the world.<sup>110</sup> Hence, of the three false doctrines mentioned, there remains the doctrine—which is the sole opinion really brought about by the misunderstanding of Scripture—that the kingdom of God is the present church; that is, the dualism of the temporal and spiritual power, the dualism of *powers*, is typically unclassical.<sup>111</sup>

There is yet another false doctrine to which Hobbes points explicitly as not being of classical origin. The error underlying the Inquisition—that the power of the law, which is a rule for actions only, can be extended to the thoughts and consciences of men—is not classical.<sup>112</sup> It is thus unclassical to make man responsible before the law for his thoughts and conscience. This error is also immediately connected to the dualism of powers, to the disastrous weakening of the unity of the regime. For if a man can be condemned to eternal punishment for a false opinion, everyone's natural care for himself will impel him to leave the salvation of his soul to his own judgment rather than to the judgment of another; he will, therefore, set his own opinion, which appeals to revelation, as binding on his *conscience*, against even, or especially, the possibly different opinion of the temporal power, thus acknowledging a divine law in addition to, even against, the law of the temporal power.<sup>113</sup>

110. Hence, Hobbes treats these phenomena in his explanation of natural religion in particular; see *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (76ff.).

111. For the religion of the pagans was "a part of humane Politiques; and teacheth part of the duty which Earthly Kings require of their Subjects." *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (79). Cf. also *Elements of Law* 2.6.2. Cf. moreover the following passage in *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (472): "For a Private man, without the Authority of the Common-wealth . . . to Interpret the Law by his own Spirit, is another Error in the Politiques; but not drawn from Aristotle, nor from any other of the Heathen Philosophers. For none of them deny, but that in the Power of making Laws, is comprehended also the Power of Explaining them where there is a need. And are not the Scriptures, in all places where they are Law, made Law by the Authority of the Common-wealth, and consequently, a part of the Civill Law?" Cf. also *English Works*, 4:448, 6:183, 221, and 243f. In *English Works*, 6:276ff., however, Hobbes speaks of the struggle between priests and kings in pagan antiquity.

112. "There is another Errour in their Civill Philosophy (which they never learned of Aristotle, nor Cicero, nor any other of the Heathen,) to extend the power of the Law, which is the Rule of Actions onely, to the very Thoughts, and Consciences of Men, by Examination, and Inquisition of what they Hold." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (471).

113. "especially in them, who teach, that a man shall bee damned to Eternall and extreame torments, if he die in a false opinion concerning an Article of the Christian Faith. For who is there, that knowing there is so great danger in an error, whom the naturall care of himself, compelleth not to hazard his Soule upon his own judgement, rather than that of any other man



Whereas the dualism of powers first arose from the misunderstanding of Scripture, the dualism of *substances* is of pagan, and in particular of Greek, origin. The dualism of substances is the opinion that in addition to corporeal substances, there are also incorporeal substances. This opinion comes about in the following way: when they are not enlightened about the nature of sight and the power of the imagination, men think that their phantasms are real things, existing outside of the human mind; and since one finds nothing that allows itself to be grasped in the place in which these allegedly existing things appear to be, many men are thus inclined to think that these figments of the imagination are incorporeal substances, spirits. The visions of the deceased principally lend themselves to this interpretation: the man who sees a dead person in a dream is inclined to believe that the dead person is an inhabitant of the air, or of heaven or hell, and he does not notice that this person lives and moves only in the dream image. Hence, the belief in incorporeal substances can be characterized, *a potiori* [chiefly], as belief in ghosts.<sup>114</sup> And as regards its source, one must say that it rests on the uncritical belief in the power of the imagination. The pagans, and in particular the Greeks, thus think the products of the power of the imagination are independent beings. This opinion, introduced into the church, underlies exorcism, the veneration of images, and the veneration of saints.<sup>115</sup> This opinion was completely sanctioned by Greek philosophy, and above all by Aristotelian philosophy, which became the foundation for the philosophy of the church. For the fundamental error of Aristotelian metaphysics is the doctrine that there are certain incorporeal beings in the world; and this doctrine is connected precisely with the belief that the soul of man, after his death, can walk separated from his body and be seen at night among the graves.<sup>116</sup>

that is unconcerned in his damnation?" Ibid. (472). Cf. in this connection the condemnation of the subversive doctrines "That every private man is Judge of Good and Evill action" and "that whatsoever a man does against his Conscience, is Sinne" at *Leviathan*, chap. 29 (223).

114. "This nature of Sight having never been discovered . . . it was hard for men to conceive of those Images in the Fancy, and in the Sense, otherwise, than of things really without us: Which . . . (because they vanish away, they know not whither, nor how,) will have to be absolutely Incorporeall . . . As if the Dead of whom they Dreamed, were not Inhabitants of their own Brain, but of the Air, or of Heaven, or Hell, not Phantasmes, but Ghosts." *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (440–41). Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (270), as well as chap. 12 (77).

115. *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (445 and 455).

116. "From these Metaphysiques [sc. of Aristotle], which are mingled with the Scripture to make Schoole Divinity, wee are told, there be in the world certain Essences separated from Bodies, which they call Abstract Essences, and Substantiall Formes." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (463). "it is upon this ground [sc. this doctrine of Separated Essences, built on the Vain Philosophy

As the fundamental error of Aristotelian metaphysics is the sanctioning of the vulgar dualism of substances, of the vulgar belief in the real existence of phantasms, so the fundamental error of the Aristotelian moral philosophy and philosophy of the state, which likewise found entrance in the church, is the complete failure to understand the importance and the essence of *law*. Aristotelian moral philosophy completely fails to understand the importance of law by teaching that the general rule for knowing the virtues and vices is being praised or blamed for certain dispositions, and by therefore making the criterion of good and bad the necessarily individual, different likes and dislikes—fundamentally, the appetites, the passions—of each individual, whereas in truth, of course, the standard of good and bad is the law of the state. It is precisely for this reason that Aristotelian moral philosophy is ignorant in the decisive respect: it is no more than a description of one's own passions.<sup>117</sup> In other words, it is nothing other than the sanctioning of the passions and therewith of disobedience against the law that is natural to man. That this is the case is shown from the politics both of Aristotle and the other "heathen politicians"<sup>118</sup>—Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, etc. etc.—who, behind the fine-sounding name of freedom, promoted anarchy. This politics is antimonarchic, not on the basis of a real study of human nature, but rather because it uncritically submits itself to the practice of the Athenian or Roman body politic; it follows the people's natural aversion to every arbitrary government, whereas of course without arbitrary government

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of Aristotle], that when a Man is dead and buried, they say his Soule (that is his Life) can walk separated from his Body, and is seen by night amongst the graves . . . the Errors, which are brought into the Church, from the Entities, and Essences of Aristotle: which it may be he knew to be false Philosophy; but writ it as a thing consonant to, and corrob[or]ative of their Religion; and fearing the fate of Socrates." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (465). "Ab hac doctrina de essentiis et formis substantialibus daemonologia Graecorum in ecclesia . . . relicta est." [From this doctrine concerning essences and substantial forms, Greek demonology has remained in the Church.] *Opera Latina*, 3:49.

117. "Aristotle, and other Heathen Philosophers define Good, and Evil, by the Appetite of men . . . But in a Common-wealth this measure is false: Not the Appetite of Private men, but the Law, which is the Will and Appetite of the State is the measure. And yet is this Doctrine still practised; and men judge the Goodnesse, or Wickednesse of their own and of other mens actions, and of the actions of the Common-wealth it selfe, by their own Passions." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (469). "Their Morall Philosophy is but a description of their own Passions. For the rule of Manners . . . is the Law . . . ; that determineth . . . what is Good, and Evil: whereas they make the Rules of Good, and Bad, by their own Liking, and Disliking." *Ibid.* (461). Cf. moreover *De cive* 3.31 and *Behemoth*, 44.

118. See above, n. 28.

perpetual anarchy is inevitable. Aristotle, in particular, completely failed to understand the necessity of arbitrary government by teaching that in a well-ordered commonwealth not men but the laws should govern: as though the laws, which without the hands and swords of men are only words and paper, could enforce themselves, could provide the *force* of law.<sup>119</sup> To sum up, Aristotle totally failed to understand that only a given, real, arbitrary law of a legislator able to compel fulfillment of the law can be the rule of ethics.

There are, therefore, two errors, at first glance completely independent of each other, which the clergy took over from Aristotle and disseminated, extinguishing the light of Scripture: the dualism of substances, and the failure to understand the importance and fundamental essence of law. On closer inspection, however, one notices that these two errors hearken back to one and the same mistake of Aristotelian philosophy. The doctrine of the dualism of substances sanctions the *power of the imagination*, as Aristotelian moral philosophy and the philosophy of the state sanctions the *passions*. The power of the imagination, however, rules the opinions of the common man as the passions rule his will. Aristotelian philosophy, therefore, does nothing other than sanction the opinions and aspirations of the common and thereby natural man, whose way of life and thinking are not subjected by Aristotle to

119. "From Aristotles Civill Philosophy, they have learned, to call all manner of Common-wealths but the Popular, . . . Tyranny. All Kings they called Tyrants; . . . And that which offendeth the People, is no other thing, but that they are governed . . . by an Arbitrary government: for which they give evil names to their Superiors; never knowing (till perhaps a little after a Civill warre) that without such Arbitrary government, such Warre must be perpetuall; and that it is Men, and Arms, not Words, and Promises, that make the Force and Power of the Laws. And therefore this is another Error of Aristotles Politiques, that in a wel ordered Commonwealth, not Men should govern but the Laws." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (470). "it is an easy thing, for men to be deceived, by the specious name of Libertie . . . And when the same error is confirmed by the authority of men in reputation for their writings in this subject, it is no wonder if it produce sedition, and change of Government. In these western parts of the world, we are made to receive our opinions concerning the Institution, and Rights of Common-wealths, from Aristotle, Cicero, and other men, Greeks and Romanes, that living under Popular States, derived those Rights, not from the Principles of Nature, but transcribed them into their books, out of the Practise of their own Common-wealths, which were Popular." *Leviathan*, chap. 21 (149–150). "[Tyrrannicidium] olim ab omnibus sophistis Platone, Aristotele, Cicerone, Seneca, Plutarcho, caeterisque Graecae et Romanae anarchiae fautoribus, non modo licitum, sed etiam maxima laude dignum existimatum est" [(Tyrrannicide) of old . . . was by all the philosophers, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and the rest of the maintainers of the Greek and Roman anarchies, held not only lawful, but even worthy of the greatest praise.] *De cive* 12.3. Cf. moreover *De cive*, preface and 12.1 and 12.3, as well as *Leviathan*, chap. 29 (226) and *Opera Latina*, 5:358f.

any true critique, to any penetrating analysis.<sup>120</sup> The uncritical character of Aristotelian philosophy (as of that of the ancients generally) is, for its part, a consequence of the fact that this philosophy was a philosophy of the *schools*. After the Athenians gained hegemony in Greece, there were many idle people in Athens who knew of nothing better to do with their time than either to tell and to hear news, or to dispute publicly before the youth of the city about philosophy. Philosophy was therefore a matter of pastime among idle men, of gossiping and frittering away time.<sup>121</sup> No wonder that this philosophy was of no benefit: the natural philosophy of these schools was rather a dream than science, and we have already seen what one should think of their metaphysics, morality, and politics. These philosophers were not concerned with the fundamental matter [*die Sache*]; for if one is concerned with the fundamental matter, with the strict truth, as the geometers are, one is not in need of any schools,<sup>122</sup> of any gathering places. And what holds for the classical schools holds no less for the present-day universities.<sup>123</sup> For why does it matter to men if they *assemble together* in order to philosophize? “Quo . . .

120. Of the Aristotelian principle, underlying traditional politics, that man is a ζῷον πολιτικόν, Hobbes says: “Quod axioma, quamquam a plurimis receptum, falsum tamen, errorque a nimis levi naturae humanae contemplatione profectus est. Causas enim, quibus homines congregantur et societate mutua gaudent, penitus inspectantibus facile constabit, non ideo id fieri, quod aliter natura non possit, sed ex accidente” [Which axiom, though received by most, is yet certainly false; and an error proceeding from our too slight contemplation of human nature. For they who shall more narrowly look into the causes for which men come together, and delight in each other’s company, shall easily find that this happens not because naturally it could happen no otherwise, but by accident]. *De cive* 1.2.

121. “After the Athenians . . . had gotten the Dominions of the Sea . . . and were grown wealthy; they that had no employment, neither at home, nor abroad, had little else to employ themselves in, but either (as St. Luke says, Acts 17.21) in telling and hearing of news, or in discoursing of Philosophy publicly to the youth of the City . . . they spent the time of their Leasure, in teaching or in disputing of their Opinions: and some in any place, where they could get the youth of the City together to hear them talk . . . From this it was, that the place where any of them taught, and disputed, was called Schola, which in their Tongue signifieth Leasure; and their Disputations, Diatribae, that is to say, Passing of the time Also the Philosophers themselves had the name of their Sects, some of them from these their Schools . . . as if we should denominate men from Morefields, and Pauls-Church, and from the Exchange, because they meet there often, to prate and loyter.” *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (459f.).

122. “But what has been the Utility of those Schools? what Science is there at this day acquired by their Readings and Disputings? That wee have of Geometry, which is the Mother of all Naturall Science, wee are not indebted for it to the Schools . . . The naturall Philosophy of those Schools, was rather a Dream than Science.” *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (461).

123. “And for Geometry, till of very late times it had no place at all [sc. in that which is now called an University]; as being subservient to nothing but rigide Truth.” *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (462).

consilio homines congregentur, ex iis cognoscitur quae faciunt congregati . . . ut loquar de iis qui profitentur prae caeteris sapere, si Philosophiae gratia coeatur, quot homines tot sunt qui caeteros docent, nempe tot volunt magistri haberi; alioqui socios non modo, ut alii, non se amant mutuo, sed odio prosequuntur.” [How, by what advice, men do meet, will be best known by observing those things which they do when they are met. . . . Lastly, that I may say somewhat of them who pretend to be wiser than others: if they meet to talk of philosophy, look, how many men, so many would be esteemed masters, or else they not only love not their fellows but even persecute them with hatred.] The assemblies for the sake of philosophy therefore have as their purpose “illud eudokimein, existimationem et honorem apud socios” [that same *eudokimein*, esteem and honor, with those with whom they have been conversant]. In other words, the purpose of these assemblies is “Gloria sive bene opinari de se ipso” [glory, or to have a good opinion of oneself].<sup>124</sup> This is to say, the fact that classical philosophy was characterized by schools, which is the reason for the superficiality of this philosophy, has, for its part, its basis in *vanity*.

The clergy thus introduced a basically erroneous philosophy, arising from vanity, into Christianity. Therefore, not only did they adopt theoretically false, even absurd, doctrines that may in fact even be damnable (if, however, they leave unchallenged the fundamentals of belief that are necessary for salvation, they do not lead to the damnation of their adherents),<sup>125</sup> but they thereby set themselves in open opposition to Scripture. For they made spiritualist metaphysics into the foundation of a speculative theology; i.e., in place of the commanded worship of the incomprehensible nature of God, they put philosophic disputation about God, the foolhardy attempt to penetrate the mysteries of the divine being; in precisely this way did they cast to the winds the Apostle Paul’s warning against vain philosophy, transgress the commandment to “captivate our understanding” to the obedience of belief, and transcend the bounds set by God himself.<sup>126</sup> The dissemination

124. *De cive* 1.2; cf. also 1.5. Cf. also the pentameter: “Professorum omnes [sc. cellae] ambitione tument” [All professors (sc. of the cell) swell with ambition]. *Opera Latina*, 1:xcii.

125. “St. Paul . . . saith, That . . . the Day of Judgment . . . shall try every mans doctrine . . . And then they that have built false Consequences on the true Foundation, shall see their Doctrines condemned; neverthelesse they themselves shall be saved . . . and live eternally.” *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (411).

126. “And these are but a small part of the Incongruities they are forced to, from their disputing Philosophically, in stead of admiring, and adoring of the Divine and Incomprehensible Nature.” *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (467). “If such Metaphysiques, and Physiques as this, be not Vain

of Greek philosophy, which has its origin in vanity, therefore represents presents an act of *disobedience*. The final basis of any disobedience, however, is that will through which all men in Adam have become guilty of disobedience to God's law, namely, the will "to be as God,"<sup>127</sup> i.e., *ambition or pride*. Hence, the basis for the dissemination of Greek philosophy, which arose from vanity, is *ambition or pride*.<sup>128</sup>

That this is the case becomes completely clear if one asks oneself in a most general way: what motive occasioned the clergy both to adopt the false doctrines of the pagans and to expound Scripture erroneously? The provisional answer is avarice and ambition.<sup>129</sup> But how are these two motives related to each other? Both the limitless striving for riches and the limitless striving for honor and glory are forms of the general inclination of all men to strive perpetually and restlessly after greater and ever greater power.<sup>130</sup> Hence, Hobbes can identify the ultimate motive of the clergy as "the love of power naturally implanted in mankind."<sup>131</sup> We can here leave undetermined how, in Hobbes's view, the love of power, avarice, and ambition are related to each

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Philosophy, there was never any; nor needed St. Paul to give us warning to avoid it." Ibid. (469). Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (256), chap. 40 (326), and chap. 46 (461).

127. Cf. *De cive* 12.1 and *Leviathan*, chap. 35 (280).

128. "the volumes of disputation about the nature of God . . . tend not to his Honour, but to the honour of our own wits, and learning." *Leviathan*, chap. 31 (252). "Ambo autem Adamus et Eva ambitione ducti, serpenti crediderunt, Deo non crediderunt, et de fructo vetito comederunt." [Both Adam and Eve, however, led by ambition, had believed the serpent, not God, and had eaten from the forbidden fruit.] *Opera Latina*, 3:523. *Ambitio* is therefore the origin of sin; hence *ambitio* is the passion to be attacked; hence Hobbes can say of his *Leviathan* that it is "Justitiae mensura, atque ambitionis elenchus" [The measure of justice, and the elenchus of ambition]. *Opera Latina* [*Vita Tho. Hobbes*], 1:xciv. This is already expressed in the title of *Leviathan*; for the Leviathan is according to Job 41:26 "King of all the children of *pride*." Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 28, end. As regards *ambitio*, cf. *De cive* 12.9. In another place (*De cive* 1.2 n. 1 end), he refers to *superbia* [pride] as the basis of injustice, which, however, is nothing other than *inanis Gloria* [vain glory], that is to say, *magnifice sentire de se ipso* [to . . . vaunt oneself]. See *De cive* 1.4 and 1.5.

129. Cf., above all, the definition of the "Kingdom of Darkness" (quoted above, pp. 53–54). Avarice or ambition is adduced as a motive of the clergy in the following passages: "ambition or profit of the clergy," chap. 44 (345); "vain-glory and ambition," chap. 42 (352); ambition, chap. 44 (420); tithes for the clergy, *ibid.* (421); "worldly ambition," chap. 45 (455); "worldly benefits," chap. 47 (475); "worldly Riches, Honour and Authority," chap. 47 (478).

130. "Competition of Riches, Honour, Command, or other power." *Leviathan*, chap. 11 (50). "I put for a generall inclination of all mankind, a perpetuall and restlesse desire of Power after power." *Ibid.* (70).

131. *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (394).

other. This much is certain, that Hobbes ascribes to ambition the greatest significance for the formation of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>132</sup> And indeed, it is not merely that the clergy, out of ambition, abuse a power conferred upon them by divine appointment; rather, that supposedly divine order *itself*, the fact of an ecclesiastical hierarchy *as such*—since the gospel does not know such a hierarchy—rests on ambition.

For what is the historical origin of this hierarchy? The clergy, who partly created the false doctrines and partly adopted them, are principally the *Roman* clergy. As the Roman clergy, they are the heirs and the perpetuators of the Roman Empire, but that means of a state that was itself built up, not in the spirit of a reasonable striving for security, but in that of a vain lust for conquest, of pride and ambition for stately splendor.<sup>133</sup> The papacy is nothing other than the specter, the “ghost,” of the deceased Roman Empire, which sits crowned on the grave of that pagan power.<sup>134</sup> Roman imperialism, as it were, after failing in its attempt to conquer the world with weapons, with the means of the real world, repeated its attempt to establish a universal monarchy with fantastic means, with the help of figments of the power of the imagination.

#### f. Characteristics of the Critique of the Tradition

The critique of the tradition presents itself as the enterprise of dismantling the entire tradition arising from the foundation of Scripture—both the dogma and the hierarchy of the church, of *any* church—right down to its

132. Cf. also the following passage: “Eodem quoque spectat canonizatio sanctorum, quam ethnici apotheosin appellarunt. Nam qui subditos alienos tanto praemio allicere potest, talis gloriae avidos ad quidlibet audendum et faciendum inducere potest. Quid enim nisi honorem apud posteros quaesiverunt Decii alique Romani.” [To this end attends the *canonization of saints*, which the heathen called *apotheosis*. For he that can allure foreign subjects with so great a reward, may bring those who are greedy of such glory, to dare and do anything. For what was it but an honourable name with posterity, which the Decii and other Romans sought after.] *De cive* 18.14. “oriuntur Ravilliaci et Clementes, qui cum reges suos occidendo ambitioni inservirent alienae, Deo se servire arbitrabantur.” [there arise Ravaillacs and Cléments, who decided to serve God Himself, when, in slaying their kings, they were serving the ambition of another.] *De homine* 13.7.

133. Cf. *De cive*, epistola dedicatoria and 13.14; *Leviathan*, chap. 21 (150) and chap. 29 (225); *English Works*, 4:288.

134. “And if a man consider the originall of this great Ecclesiasticall Dominion, he will easily perceive, that the Papacy, is no other, than the Ghost of the deceased Romane Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof: For so did the Papacy start up on a Sudden out of the Ruines of that Heathen Power.” *Leviathan*, chap. 47 (480).



foundation in Scripture for the sake of preserving and restoring its foundation.<sup>135</sup> This critique, therefore, is consciously only destructive. Beyond the explicit opinion of Hobbes, however, it is only destructive in that it is not guided by a positive, original understanding of Scripture. With this statement we do not mean to exclude Hobbes's being proved right, over against the tradition, in the eyes of an unpartisan judge, in this or that point in his exegesis of Scripture. But even in these cases, it would always remain to ask whether the manifest departure of tradition from the explicit teachings of Scripture, even if its deviation from and indeed contradiction of Scripture is not that "harmony and scope of the whole Bible" that Hobbes invokes, is more correct than the insistence on the literal sense of Scripture, which has, in addition, the neglect of all texts "of obscure, or controverted Interpretation"<sup>136</sup> as its condition, and therefore arbitrariness as its principle.

In truth, Hobbes's critique of the tradition on the basis of Scripture is guided not by the earnest wish to find in Scripture the tree of life, the divine order of human life, but by the calculated intention to secure a fixed view, independent of Scripture, of the human ordering of human life, through subsequent recourse to Scripture against objections on the part of the church and theology. The investigation of the meaning that the word *spirit* has in the Bible is thus preceded by an explanation of the scientific, as well as the vulgar, meaning of the words *body* and *spirit*, which rests utterly on Hobbes's peculiar principles, and this explanation is evidently decisive for the exegesis of Scripture introduced only afterward.<sup>137</sup> And the biblical-scientific [*bibelwissenschaftliche*]\* critique of the dualism of powers completely presupposes the central thoughts of Hobbesian politics.<sup>138</sup> We could, and we had to, disregard the philosophic presuppositions of the critique of the tradition, if Hobbes's fiction of a pure investigation into Scripture was to have even the slightest validity; this fiction must, however, be reckoned with because it is grounded in the fundamental matter: for how else, other than by finding oneself prepared to acknowledge Scripture alone as the basis for argumentation, can one criticize a position whose most radical representatives fundamentally question the right of reason not to obey revelation? But as necessary

135. See above, n. 12.

136. *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (414).

137. *Leviathan*, chap. 34, beginning.

\* See Spinoza's *Critique of Religion*, 251–68, *The Early Writings of Leo Strauss*, ed. Michael Zank (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 139–200, and Zank's discussion of this term in, 196–97 n. 3—TRANS.

138. *Leviathan*, chap. 38, beginning.



as this fiction also is, it is in reality *only* a fiction. This is to say that the critique that is exercised only fictitiously and only subsequently on the basis of Scripture but in truth and originally on the basis of philosophic presuppositions thoroughly independent of Scripture is not that critique of religion which we identified at the outset as the presupposition of both Hobbes's political science and his philosophy in general.

The philosophic presuppositions that, not being derived from the Bible, are made by Hobbes into the basis of the interpretation of the Bible are the monism of substances and—based on that—the monism of powers. The entire structure of the Hobbesian critique makes sense only on the condition that the monism of substances is the metaphysical presupposition of the monism of powers, or that the dualism of substances is the metaphysical presupposition of the dualism of powers.<sup>139</sup> As long as he argues on the basis of Scripture, however, Hobbes cannot call into question the dualism of God and creation, and therefore the possibility of miracles, as well as the possibility, grounded in that first possibility, of a nonspiritual justification of the dualism of powers. He is, therefore, compelled to engage in a critique of the dualism of powers that, if sufficient for practical purposes, is still thoroughly unsatisfactory theoretically. There are two different ways by which he arrives at the result wished for by him. *First*, the method of *making outdated*: Hobbes admits miracles and their political consequences, but he denies the relevance of what he has admitted. He thus acknowledges the kingdom of God resting on revelation (though with the qualification, arising from the denial of the dualism of substances, that this kingdom is entirely an earthly one), but he claims that it is fully in the past, or rather really in the future. With this intention, he repeatedly emphasizes, in particular, the exceptional status of the apostolic age as well as of the immediately following age.<sup>140</sup> *Second*, the method of *erosion*: Hobbes admits miracles and their political consequences, but he disputes the political significance of what he has admitted. He thus admits that there is a spiritual power that rests on divine appointment through Christ;<sup>141</sup> but he then shows in the sequel that this

139. Hobbes justifies the critique of the dualism of substances he sketches in *Leviathan* with the following words: "But to what purpose (may some man say) is such subtilty in a work of this nature, where I pretend to nothing but what is necessary to the doctrine of Government and Obedience? It is to this purpose, that men may no longer suffer themselves to be abused, by them, that by this doctrine of Separated Essences, . . . would fright them from Obeying the Laws of their Country." *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (465).

140. *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (346, 368 f., and 383) and chap. 45 (445). Cf. also n. 77 above.

141. *Leviathan*, chap. 42, beginning.

"power" is nothing more than the commission to teach and to preach and so on, in no way implies the power to command, and is therefore in truth no power at all. He thus admits, in particular, that the power of binding and loosing, to which the right of excommunication belongs, had devolved upon the apostles and their successors; but he then shows that this power (in Christian states) is confined to the right of spiritual powers to announce the pronounced judgment of the secular courts in the church, or to their right of no longer associating with their "scholars" who, in spite of their warnings, stubbornly continue to lead an unchristian life—provided that this right is not abrogated by a command of the temporal power to the contrary.<sup>142</sup>

Forced by the presupposition of miracles, which cannot be gotten around, to a modified acknowledgment of spirits and angels—namely, as corporeal beings—Hobbes insists even more emphatically on the unconditional denial of the devil and hell. Hobbes, therefore, in no way turns solely against the belief in *incorporeal* substances as such, but also and especially against the belief in evil, *terrifying* superhuman powers as such. With this aim the foundation of Hobbes's critique of the religious tradition, indeed of his critique of religion in general, is disclosed: this foundation is *Epicureanism*.<sup>143</sup> We understand by Epicureanism not primarily the *doctrine* of Epicurus and his school, but rather an interest natural to man, a uniform and elementary *outlook* [*Gesinnung*], which merely found its classic expression in the philosophy of Epicurus.<sup>144</sup> We hereby take as our own the viewpoint of the Jewish and Christian tradition, which, often without thinking of the specific teachings of Epicurus, and at times even without knowing much about these, saw in the Epicurean *the* enemy of biblical truth. The Epicurean outlook is the will to free man from the fear, determined by nature, of the divine and of death, so that on the basis of a prudent calculation of the chances for pleasure and pain that present themselves to man, based on a careful elimination

142. *Leviathan*, chapter 42 (347–54).

143. Hobbes's explicit judgment of Epicurean philosophy (see *Opera Latina*, 3:540, *English Works*, 4:387 and 6:98) does not differ from his explicit, more or less disparaging judgment of ancient philosophy as a whole (cf. also the extensive critique of Epicurus-Lucretius in *De corpore* 26.3). That there is in truth a close connection between Hobbes and Epicureanism, however, has never been altogether unrecognized. One need only refer to the judgment of J[ohann] Fr[anz] Buddeus, who characterizes Hobbes as "Epicureae philosophiae consecrator" [an adherent of the Epicurean philosophy]. *Isagoge historico-theologica ad theologiam universam* (Leipzig, 1727), 280, as well as 1383; see also Buddeus, *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae* (Leipzig, 1724), 455. [See Buddeus, *Gesammelte Schriften*, reprint ed., 10 vols. (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1999–2006).]

144. Cf., in this connection, Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, 38–52, 58ff., 90f., 107f., 209ff., and 222.

or avoidance of everything troublesome, disturbing, and painful, one might lead a thoroughly happy life. It belongs essentially to this outlook that it is in the interest of the man governed by it to eliminate the fear of gods and of death, and thus to take up the critique of religion. And it is not only the will to take up the critique of religion that is predetermined by this outlook, but even the structure of the critique of religion as well. This outlook, however, is grounded so deeply in human nature that it cannot have been, and was not, effective merely for the adherents of a particular philosophy. We therefore leave aside the features peculiar to the school of Epicurus; we even pass over those doctrines that arise from Greek presuppositions generally; we emphasize solely those typical thoughts, developed in a classic manner by Epicurus, or made by him into express means for the critique of religion out of teachings already handed down to him, that are revived in essentially unaltered form in the seventeenth century, and in particular by Hobbes. These thoughts are the following: (1) The fear of the gods and of death, which dominates man from the outset and prevents his happiness, can be banished by the science of nature alone; science banishes this fear by revealing the groundlessness of the fear; science thus demonstrates in one move that the fear that constitutes the essence of religion is a consequence of ignorance, of a lack of knowledge about nature.<sup>145</sup> (2) Science comprehends all occurrence as determined, unchanging, regular, steady, not undetermined, arbitrary, chaotic, erratic: Nature is potentially and actually *operâ sine divom* [at work without god];<sup>146</sup> the gods do not need to act, and they do not act; man therefore does not need to fear them.<sup>147</sup> (3) If nature is understood in such a way as not to be troubling to man, it would be understood as without riddle and secret in principle, and thus only corporeal substances could be acknowledged as substances, and only local motions as alterations: the

145. Cf. *Leviathan*, chaps. 11 (74) and 12 (76) with Epicurus, *Sententiae Selectae* 10–13, Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.140ff. and 5.1148–98, Cicero, *De finibus* 1.13.43–14.46, as well as 1.19.64. The passage from Lucretius 2.55–58 also pertinent here is used by Hobbes as a motto for a study in the critique of religion (*English Works*, 4:385) [*An Historical Narration Concerning Heresy, and the Punishment Thereof*].

146. Cf., above all, Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 1.143ff. As regards the thought concerning the determined character of all events, it is sharpened by Hobbes's determinism in a way that far exceeds the teaching of Epicurus.

147. The Epicurean doctrine of the gods has understandably no immediate equivalent in Hobbes; see the following paragraph in the text. Even so, one recognizes a kinship between the *quasi corpus* [as it were body] of the Epicurean gods and the spiritual bodies of the angels and the elect.

Epicurean outlook demands a mechanistic-corporealistic physics.<sup>148</sup> (4) As physics generally frees man from the fear of gods, so psychology frees him from the fear of death; the fear of death is in large part fear of a fearsome life after death; the belief in a fearsome life after death has its basis in phantasms, which, as such, are not scrutinized; for the sake of his ease, man requires an analysis of fantasy and, which is inseparable from this, an analysis of sense perception; he requires this analysis all the more as the material for the pre-scientific conceptions of gods comes from fantasy, from dream.<sup>149</sup>

Compared with original Epicureanism, Hobbes's critique of the religious tradition presents itself as a post-Christian modification of Epicureanism. To be sure, this modification was, at least in principle, accounted for and settled by Epicurus. Epicurus says, "It would be better to follow the myth about the gods than to be a slave to the fate of which the physicists speak. For the one sketches out a hope that the gods, through honor, may be turned by entreaty, but the other carries with it an inexorable necessity."<sup>150</sup> Epicurus thereby indicates the possibility that precisely through belief in active gods, the fear, not merely of the gods, but also of death can be banished; to this end, the gods would admittedly have to be *benevolent* gods: they would have to use their power solely in order to prepare man for a happy life during and after this one. This possibility deserved precedence, precisely on Epicurus's terms, over Epicurean physics and theology; for the fear of death in particular is allayed in an incomparably more effective manner through the belief in active and solely benevolent gods, and all the more so through the belief in an

148. Buddeus refers to the dependence of Hobbes's critique of spiritualism on Epicurus's teaching. ["Ad recentiores si nos convertamus philosophos, primum se nobis offert Epicureae philosophiae consector THOMAS HOBBIUS, qui, cum non alias, quam corporeas, seu materiales admitteret substantias, spiritibus in suo systemate locum concedere non potuit." (If we turn to more recent philosophers, the first to present himself to us is Thomas Hobbes, a follower of Epicurean philosophy, who, since he did not accept substances other than corporeal or material ones, could not allow a place for spirits in his system.)] *Isagoge historico-theologica*, 280.

149. Hobbes says of one of his books about physical matters, "Ille docet motus animi et phantasmata sensus, Nec sanos patitur spectra timere viros" [It teaches the motions of the spirit and the phantasms of the senses, and that sane men not be afflicted by or fear specters]. *Opera Latina*, 1:xciv. [The loose English verse translation of the *Vita Thomae Hobbes*, the "Verse Life," from which this quotation comes, reads: "Where I Teach Ethicks, the Phantomes of the Sense / How th' Wise with Spectres, fearless may dispense." *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*, ed. J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 261.] Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 12 (77) with Lucretius 1.96ff. and 5.1148ff. Cf. also *Opera Latina*, 1:xviii.

150. Diogenes Laërtius 10 §134. ['ἔπει κρείττον ἦν τῷ περὶ θεῶν μύθῳ κατακολουθεῖν ἢ τῇ τῶν φυσικῶν εἰμαρμένῃ δουλεύειν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐλπίδα παραιτήσεως ὑπογράφει θεῶν διὰ τιμῆς, ὁ δὲ ἀπαραίτητον ἔχει τὴν ἀνάγκην']

omnipotent and solely benevolent God who rewards men with eternal happiness without ever or without substantially punishing them, than through the dubious argument that death is nothing to us because after death we perceive nothing more.<sup>151</sup> If the belief in the pagan gods is therefore replaced by the belief in an omnipotent, solely benevolent God, the possibility opens up that the Epicurean outlook not only no longer requires the critique of religion, not only is compatible with religious conceptions, but even recognizes in religious conceptions the most appropriate perspective, the one most conducive to tranquility and the elimination of terror, the most, even the only, consoling and *therefore* true perspective. Hence, one can grasp the fact that ever since revealed religion encountered the Greek world, men have come forward time and again who, in conceiving of the God of the Bible as a solely benevolent God, generally denied God's punitive justice because it is incompatible with God's benevolence, or took from God's punitive justice every concrete significance for the life of man by invoking God's benevolence to contest the terrible consequences of the divine punitive justice claimed by the tradition. The most radical form in which this possibility was realized is the doctrine of Marcion; and this doctrine was repudiated as a modified Epicureanism by none other than Tertullian.<sup>152</sup> The critique of the religious tradition by the modern Enlightenment—characteristically directed, just

151. Epicurus, *Sententiae Selectae* 2. Cf. in this connection the statement of the Epicurean Gassendi: "si res suavis est, mortem reputare ut malorum finem, longe suavius est, accessio nem praeterea bonorum summorum sperare, pari ratione, qua athletam non tam delectat, quod a contentione luctaque cessaturus sit, quam quod praemium consequuturus." [If it is sweet to regard death as the end of evils, it is far sweeter to hope, in addition, for the coming of the highest good things, for the same reason that it does not please an athlete so much that he is going to finish the contest and battle than that he is going to receive a prize.] *Syntagma philosophiae Epicuri* (The Hague, 1659), 31.

152. "Si aliquem de Epicuri schola deum affectavit Christi nomine titolare, ut quod beatum et incorruptibile sit neque sibi neque alii molestias praestet (hanc enim sententiam ruminans Marcion removit ab illo severitates et iudiciares vires), aut in totum immobilem et stupentem Deum concepisse debuerat (et quid illi cum Christo, molesto et Judaeis per doctrinam et sibi persensum?), aut de ceteris motibus cum agnovisse (et quid illi cum Epicuro, nec sibi nec Christianis necessario?). [If (Marcion) had affected to give some god of the school of Epicurus the name of Christ, on the grounds that what is blessed and incorruptible would bring trouble neither to itself nor to another (for in ruminating over this opinion, Marcion has removed from Him the severity and the force of judgment), he ought either to have conceived of a completely immobile and rigid god (and what would that one have to do with Christ, who troubled the Jews through his teaching and himself through what he felt?), or to have recognized him as having other emotions (and what would that one have to do with Epicurus, not being a kinsman either to him or to Christians?).] *Adversus Marcionem* 1.25. As regards the "Deus optimus" [best God], Tertullian says moreover: "Sed puto jam et non optimus jam aliquid et cum Creatore moratus, nec in

like that of Gnosticism and Marcion, against the Old Testament, above all—presents itself in a very different manner outwardly but is guided in principle by the same tendency. The enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, insofar as it preserves the connection with the Bible to some slight extent, is characterized by its attacking the traditional teachings and outlooks by appealing to the merciful benevolence of God. More precisely, the emphatic ranking of the merciful benevolence of God over his power, his honor, and his punitive anger is peculiar to this enlightenment; for it, God is not primarily the demanding, the summoning, but rather the mercifully benevolent God. This is what is meant when Hobbes argues that the eternal punishments of hell are incompatible with the *benevolence* and the *mercy* of God, and hence when he claims that the damned would be destroyed after the resurrection.<sup>153</sup>

In this respect as in so many others, Hobbes follows the teaching of the *Socinians*.<sup>154</sup> Socinianism is as it were the extreme limit of Hobbes's

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totum Epicuri deus." [But I do not think he is best anymore, now that he has spent some time with the Creator, and He is not a completely Epicurean god.] Ibid., 4.15. Cf. also 2.16.

153. "And perhaps if the death of a sinner were, as [Bishop Bramhall] thinks, an eternal life in extreme misery, a man might as far as Job hath done, expostulate with God Almighty; . . . accusing him . . . of little tenderness and love to mankind." *English Works*, 5:103f. "But though God have power to afflict a man, and not for sin without injustice, shall we think God so cruel as to afflict a man, and not for sin, with extreme and endless torment? Is it not cruelty? No more than to do the same for sin, when he that so afflicteth might without trouble have kept him from sinning." Ibid., 5:17. "a iustitia Dei, qui cruciatus aeternos peccatoribus comminatus est, arguere aeternitatem ipsorum cruciatuum non potes. Etsi enim qui bona quae debentur non praestat, injustus sit, is tamen, qui mala vel damna debita non praestat, injustus non est, sed misericors. Quanto minus Deus, qui est infinite misericors, non poterit sine iustitiae suae violatione mitigare tum diuturnitatem tum acerbiter meritum poenarum?" [from the justice of God, who has threatened the sinners with eternal torments, you cannot prove the eternity of those torments. For although he who does not bring forward the good things that are owed may be unjust, nevertheless, he who does not bring forward the evil or harmful things that are owed is not unjust, but merciful. How much less will God, who is infinitely merciful, not be able, without a violation of his justice, to mitigate the permanence and bitterness of the deserved punishments?] *Opera Latina*, 3:52. Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (431), *De homine* 14.6, and *English Works*, 4:354, as well as above, pp. 43ff.

154. "[Hobbes] témoigne aussi qu'il lui semble que les peines des méchants doivent cesser par leur destruction; c'est à peu près le sentiment des sociniens, mais il semble que les siens vont bien plus loin." [(Hobbes) testifies also that it seems to him that the pains of the wicked must end in their destruction; this opinion closely approaches that of the Socinians, but it seems that he goes much further.] Leibniz, *Reflexions sur le livre de Hobbes* . . . § 2. [This translation is taken from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. E. M. Huggard (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), 394.] "[Sociniani] aeternitatem . . . poenarum infernalium cum iustitia et bonitate divina conciliari non posse existimantes, quidam illorum annihilationem potius damnatorum,



approach to Scripture: Hobbes accepts the teaching of Scripture, if at all, only according to the Socinian interpretation. Above all, he takes over the central thought of Socinianism according to which the essence of Christianity is the proclamation and guarantee of immortality, in such a way, however, that the "forgiveness of sins is still left entirely out of view, or is taken account of only as a factor in eternal life."<sup>155</sup> It therefore serves only to sharpen the fundamental thought of Socinianism that Hobbes teaches, "to be saved from sin, is to be saved from all the Evil, and Calamities [i.e., and therefore, above all, from the death] that Sinne hath brought upon us."<sup>156</sup> From Socinianism, accordingly, Hobbes came to understand the hope for immortality in the true Epicurean way of thinking as a simple guarantee against the fear of death, and not primarily as the reproachful reminder of man's duty and guilt. The presupposition for this conception of immortality is that the significance of God's punitive justice, if it is not denied in general, at any rate recedes behind his mercy.<sup>157</sup> We forgo developing the individual Socinian teachings in their connection with the principle mentioned. We emphasize here only the most important agreements between Hobbes and Socinianism.<sup>158</sup> The prin-

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quam aeternitatem poenarum admittere voluerunt." [(Some of) the Socinians, considering that the eternity of infernal punishments cannot be reconciled with divine justice and goodness, wished to accept the annihilation of those condemned rather than the eternity of their punishments.] Buddeus, *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae*, 490. "Poenas . . . aeternas [Sociniani] non positive, sed negative interpretantur, per annihilationem scilicet eorum, qui durissima illa merebantur." [The Socinians interpret eternal punishments not in a positive but in a negative way, that is, as the annihilation of the people who deserved these hardest things.] Nicol[aus] Arnold, *Religio Sociniana seu catechesis Racoviana maior publicis disput. refutata* (Franeker, Netherlands, 1654), 101. Arnold points out, moreover (p. 107), that the Socinians had, to his knowledge, "not yet" dared to express openly their opinion about the fate of the damned. This should be compared with Hobbes's caution in handling this question (mentioned above, p. 44). Cf. also O. Fock, *Der Socinianismus nach seiner Stellung in der Gesamtentwicklung des Christlichen Geistes, nach seinem Verlauf, und nach seinem Lehrbegriffe* (Kiel, 1847), 718ff.

155. Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Freiburg: Paul Siebeck, 1897), 3:715. [Strauss's note cites p. 681, evidently referring to an earlier edition with different pagination, which we have unfortunately not been able to track down. We have used an English translation by Neil Buchanan in: Dr. Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. 7 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905), 153.]

156. *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (316). Cf. also the comment, "[Christ's] eternall Kingdome, wherein shall be Protection, and Life everlasting." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (360).

157. Faustus Socinus, *Praelectiones theologiae*, chap. 16. The formulations in *De homine* 14.6 are based on this chapter, as well as on chapters 15, 17, 22, and 23. Cf. in addition Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 92–97.

158. It should be noted in this connection that Hobbes's *Art of Sophistry* (*English Works*, 6:529–36), which probably appeared around 1636, is an imitation of Faustus Socinus's *Elementi [Elendii] sophistici . . . explicati, et exemplis Theologicis illustrati* (Rakow, 1625).

ciple of Scripture that is decisive for Hobbes's critique of the tradition, by which both the ecclesiastical tradition and, especially, the inner testimony of the holy spirit are rejected as presuppositions for the understanding of Scripture, is Socinian.<sup>159</sup> The conviction that the sole standard of belief is Scripture, and that the interpretation of Scripture is a matter for the reasonable judgment of individuals, is Socinian.<sup>160</sup> The distinction between that part of Scripture which is necessary for salvation and that part which is only "additamentum . . . vel probatio doctrinae" [an addition . . . or approbation of doctrine] is Socinian.<sup>161</sup> The replacement of "Greek" theology by "biblical," according to which, among other things, God's being is explained as his power over us, God's eternity as infinite duration in time, is Socinian.<sup>162</sup> The critique of the Trinity, in particular the denial of the divinity of Christ, is Socinian.<sup>163</sup> The preference, given with the denial of Christ's divinity, of the teaching of Christ's office over the teaching of Christ's person is Socinian.<sup>164</sup> The denial of natural immortality, i.e., of the immortality of the soul, as well as of the claim that between bodily death and the resurrection there is no life whatsoever, is Socinian.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, the denial of knowledge of God that is

159. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (405f.) and chap. 45 (451) with F. Socinus, *Opera Omnia in Duos Tomos Distincta* (Amsterdam, 1656), 2:358 and Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 39f.

160. Cf. above, pp. 34–35 with Fock, *Der Socinianismus*, 381.

161. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 43, with Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 2:278.

162. Cf. Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 80ff. and 85ff., as well as Fock, *Der Socinianismus*, 427ff. In Hobbes, cf. the explanation of divine attributes as the attributes of honor, i.e., of the recognition of power; as regards the eternity of God, cf., among others, *Leviathan*, chap. 46 (464).

163. Even Hobbes's claim that Christ is a "Person" of God in the same sense as Moses was prepared by the Socinians; cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 16 (114) with Arnold, *Religio Sociniana*, 138f. and 344.

164. Cf. Fock, *Der Socinianismus*, 551f., and *Leviathan*, chap. 41.

165. "Tantum id mihi videtur statui posse, post hanc vitam, animam, sive, animum hominis non ita per se subsistere, ut praemia ulla poenasve sentiat, vel etiam ista sentiendi sit capax . . . statuo . . . animae nomine [sc. in S. Scriptura] vitam significari . . . Vivere . . . adhuc apud Deum is dici et potest, et debet, qui aliquando in vitam, eamque immortalem ad ipso Domino [omnino] revocabitur." [I think that this much could be established: after this life the spirit or the soul of the human does not exist in itself in such a way as to feel any rewards or punishments or even to be capable of feeling these things . . . I establish that the name soul (that is, in the Holy Scripture) signifies life . . . Still that person can and should be called to live with God who one day will be recalled in life and in immortal life by God himself.] Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 1:454 b. As regards Hobbes, cf. above, pp. 39–43. In particular, cf. the interpretation of Genesis 2:17 and Romans 5:12ff. in Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 1:537 and 541, as well as 2:261, with *Leviathan*, chap. 38 (308f.); cf. moreover the interpretation of the story of the rich man and of Lazarus as a mere parable, as well as that of Luke 20:36–38, in Socinus, *Opera Omnia*, 1:145, with *Leviathan*, chap. 44 (431).



either (a) innate or (b) acquired through consideration of creation is Socinian. Also, the name of God "non esse nomen essentiae sive naturae, sed officii et dignitatis" [being the name not of an essence or nature, but of office and dignity] is Socinian. The replacement of satisfaction for sins by forgiveness of sins is Socinian.<sup>166</sup> Hobbes's critique of the tradition differs from Socinianism, first, in its view of the Christian state, which is fully incompatible with Socinian principles—this view is derived from *Erastianism*—and, second, in not only sharpening the antispiritualism inherent in Socinianism but even making it into the leitmotif of the investigation; Hobbes's clear explication of antispiritualism is made possible by *Epicureanism*.

In sum, Hobbes's critique of the tradition—apart from the teaching of the Christian state that belongs to it—can be characterized in the following manner: this critique is based on a complete radicalization of Socinianism along the lines of Epicureanism, or rather on an Epicureanism that ventures into the light only under the cover of Socinianism, as a position that is indeed undoubtedly honestly faithful to Scripture, but that, of the positions faithful to Scripture in the seventeenth century, comes closest to Epicureanism. It remains to ask whether the reservations regarding Epicureanism are based only on a false, external deference to the power of the spiritual authority, as it first seems, or whether a considerable significance can be attributed to them.

## B. THE CRITIQUE OF SCRIPTURE

The critique of the tradition was conducted on the basis of the presupposition that Scripture is the word of God and that it accordingly transmits and vouches for teachings that cannot be understood, proven, or refuted by finite human understanding and that are therefore binding *only because* they are revealed. The suprarational teachings transmitted by Scripture should, however, be not only true but also of the highest importance, namely, necessary for salvation. Every man is by nature most interested in salvation, in eternal life; but that there is salvation and how one can obtain it man can know only through Scripture. The suprarational teachings necessary for salvation, which are vouched for by Scripture, are characterized not only by the fact that they are communicated as revealed, and therefore as though by a miracle, but also by the fact that their content presupposes the possibility and reality of miracles. This presupposition, however, is what—in addition

166. Cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 38, end, 41, beginning, and 43 (412), as well as *De homine* 14.6 with Socinus, *Praelectiones theologicae*, chaps. 15–17.

to spiritualism—fundamentally calls into question the politics taught by Hobbes.<sup>167</sup> The shaking of the authority of Scripture, indeed of the possibility of revelation in general, is therefore the *conditio sine qua non* [indispensable condition] for the ultimate safeguard, if not for the original possibility, of Hobbesian politics.

### a. The Knowability and the Believability of Revelation

According to Hobbes's claim, the two questions How do we *know* that Scripture is the word of God? and Why do we *believe* that Scripture is the word of God? are put wrongly; he explains that the only acceptable question is: By what authority has Scripture been made *law*?<sup>168</sup> The answer to this question, the only one acceptable, is that Scripture can be made law only by the authority of the temporal power.<sup>169</sup> This is to say that Scripture on its own has no legal force at all. If, however, it is made law by a head of state, it is established thereby only that one may not *express* criticism [*Kritik*] of Scripture.<sup>170</sup> Scripture, therefore, even in being made law by the head of state, does not thus obtain a *real* authority, binding on the conscience.<sup>171</sup> This complete

167. See above, p. 45ff.

168. "It is a question much disputed between the divers sects of Christian Religion, From whence the Scriptures derive their Authority; which question is also propounded sometimes in other terms, as, How wee know them to be the Word of God, or, Why we believe them to be so: And the difficulty of resolving it, ariseth chiefly from the improperness of the words wherein the question it self is couched. For it is believed on all hands, that the first and originall Author of them is God; and consequently the question disputed, is not that. Again, it is manifest, that none can know they are Gods Word, (though all true Christians believe it,) but those to whom God himself hath revealed it supernaturally; and therefore the question is not rightly moved, of our *Knowledge* of it. Lastly, when the question is propounded of our *Beleeve*; because some are moved to beleeve for one, and others for other reasons, there can be rendred no one generall answer for them all. The question truly stated is, By what Authority they are made *Law*." *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (267f.).

169. "the Scripture of the New Testament is there only Law, where the lawfull Civill Power hath made it so." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (361). That the same goes for the Old Testament is shown in the same passage, *ibid.* (356–59). Cf. moreover *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (260 and 268).

170. The commandment to captivate reason to belief is thus reduced to the commandment to *speake* "as (by lawfull Authority) we are commanded . . . though the mind be incapable of any Notion at all from the words spoken." *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (256).

171. One should compare the following passage to the sequence knowledge-belief-law (see n. 168 above): "But whether men *Know*, or *Beleeve*, or *Grant* the Scriptures to be Word of God; if out of such places of them, as are without obscurity, I shall shew what Articles of Faith are necessary, and onely necessary for Salvation, those men must needs *Know*, *Beleeve*, or *Grant* the same." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (407). Regarding the meaning of "grant," cf. *De cive* 18.4.

dispensability of the authority of Scripture, which Hobbes effects, shows as clearly as possible that for Hobbes himself, Scripture is in no way authoritative. This is in fact the meaning of his rejection of the questions of how we know or why we believe that Scripture is the word of God: Hobbes does not *know*; in fact he does not even *believe*, that Scripture is revealed.

A *knowledge* of the revealed character of Scripture, in Hobbes's view, would be granted on the condition that it could be grounded, either in the infallibility of the church, or in the inner testimony of the holy spirit. These theological modes of justification are explicitly rejected by Hobbes.<sup>172</sup> He thereby only follows his Socinian teachers who had rejected, in particular, the Reformers' justification of the authority of Scripture according to the inner testimony of the holy spirit.<sup>173</sup> Now the Socinians had replaced the theological justifications with a purely rational, historical justification. By denying, in plain terms, that knowledge of the revealed character of Scripture is possible, Hobbes tacitly rejects the rational, historical justification as well. In place of the historical *justification* of the *revealed character*, he puts the historical *critique* of the age and therewith of the *authenticity* of the biblical Scriptures.

The historical-critical study<sup>174</sup> leads to the result, apparently quite favorable to Scripture, "that the Old and New Testament, as we have them now, are the true Registers of those things, which were done and said by the Prophets, and Apostles."<sup>175</sup> But Hobbes arrives at this reassuring result only after he has discussed and rejected the objection that the New Testament writings, in particular, could have been corrupted by the Christian clergy. What is important is not that in this passage he explains that the suspicion of falsification is unjustified—in another passage he makes it understood that as regards many texts of the New Testament, the suspicion of corruption

172. "why we beleieve the Bible to be the Word of God, is much disputed, as all questions must needs be, that are not well stated. For they make not the question to be, Why we *Beleeve* it, but, How wee *Know* it; as if Beleeving and Knowing were all one. And thence while one side ground their Knowledge upon the Infallibility of the Church, and the other side, on the Testimony of the Private Spirit, neither side concludeth what it pretends. For how shall a man know the Infallibility of the Church, but by knowing first the Infallibility of the Scripture? Or how shall a man know his own Private spirit to be other than a Presumption of his own Gifts? Besides, there is nothing in the Scripture, from which can be inferred the Infallibility of the Church; much less, of any particular Church; and least of all, the Infallibility of any particular man." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (405–6). Cf. also *English Works*, 4:339f.

173. See above, n. 154.

174. *Leviathan*, chap. 33; cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (358f.) and *De cive* 16.12.

175. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (266).

is appropriate<sup>176</sup>—but rather that he considers a falsification fundamentally possible: a falsification of the New Testament by the Christian clergy is fundamentally possible because the New Testament in its currently available form has been attested to only since the Council of Laodicea, i.e., only since a time in which the clergy, estranged from the spirit of the gospel, led the church, and in which “the copies of the Books of the New Testament, were in the hands only of the Ecclesiasticks.”<sup>177</sup> Hobbes arrives at an analogous result as regards the Old Testament: he indeed thinks it certain that, above all, the genuine Book of the Law (i.e., Deuteronomy 11–27) was composed by Moses himself, but he denies decisively that the Pentateuch as a whole could have originated from Moses, or even from one of his contemporaries; and even that Mosaic Book of the Law, as he emphasizes, was lost for a long time and rediscovered only under King Josiah; the historical books of the Old Testament appeared only after the events chronicled in them; the prophets all lived during the captivity or shortly before it; the Old Testament as a whole was compiled in its current form no earlier than the time of Ezra.<sup>178</sup> The writings of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, therefore, being fundamentally exposed to the suspicion of having been falsified and corrupted, and to the suspicion, in particular, that the prophecies were fabricated *ex eventu* [after the fact],<sup>179</sup> we cannot speak of a *knowledge* that we have in the writings before us the documents of revelation.

Even more important than the hidden result of the historical-critical investigation is its tacit presupposition, namely, that the books of Scripture can and must be subjected to a critique in fundamentally the same way as any number of other literary documents. Already in undertaking the historical-critical study as such—entirely irrespective of what results it leads to—Hobbes, who more than ever does not recognize as binding any church or tradition or certainty of faith vouching for the authority of Scripture, makes it understood that he has broken with the belief in the revealed character of Scripture. His unbelief is therefore not the consequence but the presupposition of the historical critique: the proof of the inauthentic character of the biblical writings is only a still further, subsequent confirmation that they

176. “such texts [sc. of the New Testament], wherein is no suspicion of corruption of the Scripture.” *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (278).

177. *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (266).

178. *Leviathan*, chaps. 33 (266) and 42 (357–58).

179. A suggestion in this direction is conveyed by the casual remark that the same warning, justified by the outcome, was given, according to the report in Chronicles, by the idolater Pharaoh Necho and, on the other hand, according to Esdras, by Jeremiah on the basis of a divine pronouncement; see *Leviathan*, chap. 36 (290).

were not revealed. One fully appreciates how little depends on the historical critique for Hobbes if one supposes for a moment that Hobbes could have been convinced by the *authenticity* of the biblical writings:\* he would not thereby have been in the least convinced of their *revealed character*. In fact, his historical critique has its basis in a critique, in principle, of revelation generally, and first of all, of the *knowability* of revelation in general.

It is, therefore, not an accident, and it is not merely based on external considerations, that in justifying his claim that there is no genuine knowledge of the revealed character of Scripture, Hobbes does not appeal to the results of his historical critique. He appeals, rather, to the fact that only those men can have knowledge of the revealed character of Scripture to whom God has revealed it through supernatural means. Since, moreover, he rejects the teaching that the revealed character of Scripture is vouched for by the inner testimony of the holy spirit, it is clear that he at any rate disqualifies all men who are not bringers of revelation from the possibility of knowing revelation.<sup>180</sup> He does not deny, rather he emphasizes, that according to Scripture there are established criteria that allow for the distinction between true and false prophets;<sup>181</sup> but these criteria naturally have validity only on the presupposition that Scripture is itself revealed. And it is precisely respecting this presupposition that Hobbes denies that it [revelation] is knowable. Because, therefore, revelation is not knowable, legislation based on revelation has for this reason no obligatory power in itself.<sup>182</sup> Hence, the Israelites in particular were obliged not by the command of God but by their own consent and promise to obey the laws proclaimed to them by Moses: Moses had no other, and no greater, authority than any other sovereign.<sup>183</sup>

That Scripture is revealed is therefore not known but only *believed*. But what is there to this belief? Belief is a gift of God, that is certain; but God

\* Strauss notes in the margin at this point, without explicitly making a footnote: "And the other way around: according to the premise of verbal inspiration one can deal with every critical difficulty: chosen people of God, unfathomable mysteries, which at the right time, hour will be revealed—Critique can only point to plausibilities: Moses with prophecy could indeed know his grave; cf. *Leviathan* 261 (bottom paragraph)—262 (top paragraph)." —EDS.

180. See above, nn. 168 and 172. Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 26 (198), 32 (324), and 33 (261).

181. As regards these criteria, cf. *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (257ff.), as well as the somewhat divergent indications in chap. 36 (298).

182. "He therefore, to whom God hath not supernaturally revealed, that they [sc. the Scriptures] are his, nor that those that published them, were sent by him, is not obliged to obey them, by any Authority, but his, whose Commands have already the force of Laws; that is to say, by any other Authority, then that of the Common-wealth, residing in the Sovereign, who only has the Legislative Power." *Leviathan*, chap. 33 (268).

183. *Leviathan*, chap. 40 (324f.) and 42 (357). Cf. above, p. 46.

gives men belief, not through inspiration or infusion,<sup>184</sup> but through natural means, namely, through their teachers. This means that believing men believe that Scripture is the word of God because they have heard it from their teachers. This belief, therefore, is completely natural: it is an ordinary belief based on hearsay that owes its special but in no way supernatural power simply to the circumstance that men mostly show their first teachers respect. Now, since in Christian states all men are taught, from childhood on, that Scripture is the word of God, it is no wonder that in Christian states all or at any rate most men believe in Scripture, and that in other states only very few do.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, the belief in Scripture is based on a reigning, publicly taught *prejudice*.

Now a prejudice as such must not necessarily be an error. Examination of the prejudice can even lead to the result that the prejudice has accidentally hit upon the truth; in this way the prejudice can be transformed into knowledge. But a transformation of this sort, with respect to the prejudice that Scripture is revealed, is impossible for the reason previously stated. Hence, this prejudice could be legitimated only by being depicted as morally, or practically, worthy of being believed. But even justifications for belief in Scripture of this sort are rejected by Hobbes—at first, through the repeated assertion that there could not be an obligation to believe. There can be no obligation to believe because belief does not depend on human will but is the necessary consequence of certain or probable arguments.<sup>186</sup> And as there is no obligation to believe, so there is no punishment for unbelief. We here disregard the fact that, according to Hobbes's claim, the explicit denial of the belief necessary for salvation, provided that it is commanded by the temporal

184. *Leviathan*, chap. 34, toward the end, chap. 43 (406), and 46 (465).

185. "It is manifest therefore, that Christian men doe not know, but onely believe the Scripture to be the Word of God; and that the means of making them believe which God is pleased to afford men ordinarily, is according to the way of Nature, that is to say, from their Teachers . . . For what other cause can there bee assigned, why in Christian Common-wealths all men either believe, or at least professe the Scripture to bee the Word of God, and in other Common-wealths scarce any; but that in Christian Common-wealths they are taught it from their infancy; and in other places they are taught otherwise?" *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (406). "By the Writings of the Fathers . . . we may find, that the Books wee now have of the New Testament, were held by the Christians of that time . . . for the dictates of the Holy Ghost . . . such was the reverence and opinion they had of their Teachers; as generally the reverence that the Disciples bear to their first Masters, in all manner of doctrine they receive from them, is not small." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (359). Cf. also n. 168 above and n. 191 below, as well as *Leviathan*, chap. 7, toward the end.

186. "Faith hath no relation to, nor dependence at all upon Compulsion, or Commandement; but onely upon certainty, or probability of Arguments drawn from Reason, or from something men beleeve already." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (342). Cf. also *Leviathan*, chap. 32 (255f.).



power and is not attended by inner denial, has no adverse consequences for the denier at all;<sup>187</sup> in any case, in the context of his critique on the basis of Scripture, Hobbes holds firmly that damnation follows from unbelief. But already in this connection, he replaces eternal punishment in hell with resurrection to a renewed, as well as a finite and sensible, existence; the actual punishment of the damned consists in their having before their eyes the eternal, insensible happiness of the elect, from which they are excluded because of their unbelief.<sup>188</sup> But is this punishment so terrible that fear of it would make one believe?<sup>189</sup> And is eternal happiness, which is only negatively defined by Hobbes,<sup>190</sup> which is thus characterized as freedom from want, unhappiness, and death, but also as freedom from—and therefore the incapacity for—any enjoyment of the senses, an object of envy for the damned? Not in any case for Hobbes, who acknowledges as genuine only the goods of the senses. But completely apart from this, the belief in eternal happiness and damnation is itself based on Scripture;<sup>191</sup> hence, the reminder that unbelief is punished with eternal damnation has no influence at all on those who do not believe in Scripture. Hobbes denies explicitly, however, not merely any obligation to believe; he denies, in essence [*der Sache nach*], not merely any punishment of unbelief; he denies also, and above all, that there is any meaningful deference of reason to revelation. This is all the more striking, since he is far from claiming the sufficiency of reason for answering all principal

187. See above, p. 65.

188. See above, p. 43.

189. "upon a Christian, that should become an Apostate, in a place where the Civill Power did persecute, or not assist the Church, the effect of Excommunication had nothing in it, neither of damage in this world, nor of terrour: Not of terrour, because of their unbeleef; nor of damage, because they returned thereby into the favour of the world; and in the world to come, were to be in no worse estate, then they which never had beleaved." *Leviathan*, chap. 42 (350). "nor is there here [sc. in the story of the Fall] any punishment but only a reducing of Adam and Eve to their original mortality, where death was no punishment but a gift of God. In which mortality he lived near a thousand years, and had a numerous issue, and lived *without misery*, and I believe shall at the resurrection obtain the immortality which then he lost." *English Works*, 5:102f. Cf. also the remark of Bishop Bramhall: "It is to be presumed, that in those their second lives, knowing certainly from T.H. that there is no hope of redemption for them from corporal death upon their well-doing, nor fear of any torments after death for their ill-doing, they [sc. the reprobates] will pass their times here as pleasantly as they can. This is all the damnation which T.H. fancieth." *English Works*, 4:359.

190. Cf., inter alia, the denial of the possibility of a *visio beatifica* [beatific vision], in *Leviathan*, chap. 6, toward the end, as well as *English Works*, 4:347.

191. "there is no naturall knowledge of mans estate after death; ... but onely a belief grounded upon other mens saying, that they know it supernaturally, or that they know those, that knew them, that knew others, that knew it supernaturally." *Leviathan*, chap. 15 (103).

questions, and in particular for knowledge of God. Accordingly, he had even said in *De cive* that without the special assistance of God, men can hardly avoid the cliffs of both atheism and superstition.<sup>192</sup> But this passage from *De cive* has no counterpart at all in *Leviathan*. In consideration of the general relation between *De cive* and *Leviathan* characterized above,<sup>193</sup> the statement quoted from *De cive* thereby proves to be a mere accommodation. The sole reminder of reason's deference to revelation to be found in *Leviathan* is the remark, following the Pauline teaching of justification, that the fulfillment of the natural moral law, which is knowable by reason, does not suffice for man's justification because, and only because, man is not capable of completely fulfilling that law: hence in order to be just, man requires, besides obedience, also forgiveness of sin, which, however, is granted to him only as a reward for his belief.<sup>194</sup> Man is therefore incapable of completely fulfilling the moral law; the utmost that is possible for him is the serious effort to fulfill that law; God accepts this effort, this will, in place of the deed *only from the believers*.<sup>195</sup> But this concession to the traditional teaching is taken back by Hobbes in the same breath so to speak: in the same chapter of *Leviathan* in which he makes this concession, he explains twice that God takes the will for the deed *among all men*.<sup>196</sup> whoever makes an honest effort to fulfill the moral law is precisely for this reason just. This latter claim alone corresponds to Hobbes's real conviction, as he expressed it in the context of his rational political science, which has no regard for revelation at all.<sup>197</sup> If, therefore, man is able not only to know the rules of the natural moral law with his natural powers, but also to *be* just, man must in no way be dependent on a justifying belief, and therefore on revelation. Therefore, not only does Hobbes not believe in revelation, he does not have any cause whatsoever for believing in revelation.

If Hobbes does not believe in revelation, and therefore also does not believe in Scripture, he has no reason to submit himself to any teaching vouched for only by Scripture and not by reason. We thus now know what we have to

192. *De cive* 16.1. With this passage Hobbes introduces the discussion of revealed religion.

193. See p. 30. above

194. Cf. above, p. 51.

195. "God accepteth not the Will for the Deed, but onely in the Faithfull." *Leviathan*, chap. 43 (413).

196. "the Will, which God doth alwaies accept for the Work it selfe, as well in good, as in evill men." Ibid. (413). "God . . . accepteth in all our actions the Will for the Deed." Ibid. (404).

197. Cf., e.g., *Leviathan*, chap. 15 (97): "The Lawes [sc. of nature], because they oblige onely to a desire, and endeavour, I mean an unfeigned and constant endeavour; he that endeavoureth their performance, fulfilleth them; and he that fulfilleth the Law, is Just."

think of his assurances in all cases in which Hobbes acknowledges a teaching simply because it is contained in Scripture. Hence, there can in particular be no doubt that Hobbes did not believe in original sin and salvation, in future rewards and punishments, in the resurrection of bodies, in the existence of angels, etc. By making it clear enough that he questioned the credibility of Scripture as such, he spared himself the necessity of explicitly denying those teachings, vouched for by Scripture alone, and thus of having to show himself any more vulnerable in the eyes of his believing opponents than he at any rate had already done. Directly on the basis of the fundamental transformation of the *belief* that Scripture is revealed into the mere *concession* that Scripture is revealed,<sup>198</sup> he could, arguing *ad hominem*, indulge with reassuring extensiveness in biblical quotations and theological locutions, and thereby continually lead readers astray about his unbelief.

Hobbes, therefore, does not need to explicitly reject those teachings which he explicitly says are vouched for only by Scripture, since, through this explanation, he has in fact rejected them already. He nevertheless did not think it superfluous to at least indicate his denial of those teachings. According to his claim, the central teaching of Scripture, not vouched for by reason, is determined by the pronouncement that men (elected to this end) will live just like, or similarly to, the angels after the resurrection. In the connection that according to Hobbes therefore exists between the belief in angels and the belief in the resurrection, the questioning of one belief suffices to raise suspicion about the other. Hobbes does indeed pretend that he believes in angels, being compelled to do so by clear passages in the New Testament; but that he does *not* in truth believe in angels the text shows, even in that passage in which he formally acknowledges the existence of angels: he makes it understood there that it is much more plausible to assume that angels are only products of human fantasy.<sup>199</sup> Hobbes indicates what the close connection between the denial of angels and the denial of the resurrection is by noting in passing, in another passage, that the Sadducees rightly found no basis for the belief in angels in the Old Testament.<sup>200</sup> If the Sadducees are right in this respect, must one not ultimately agree with their denial of the resurrec-

198. See above, n. 171.

199. See above, n. 53.

200. "the Jews . . . , without any thing in the Old Testament that constrained them thereunto, had generally an opinion, (except the sect of the Sadduces,) that those apparitions [sc. Angels and Daemons] . . . were substances, not dependent on the fancy, but permanent creatures of God." *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (275).

tion, of the future life? No, Hobbes does *not* agree with them; for he knows only too well how dangerous such an agreement would be: by denying not only the existence of angels and demons but also the existence of spirits in general (and thereby the future life), the Sadducees came suspiciously close to atheism.<sup>201</sup> And why deny the existence of spirits, naturally of corporeal spirits—for speech about incorporeal spirits is absurd—and expose oneself to the suspicion of atheism? Are not the air and many other invisible bodies corporeal spirits? And does not the body of man become invisible after death in the course of decay? And is not, therefore, the resurrection of the crude, visible body in the form of a fine, invisible, “spiritual” body easy to understand and therefore to believe?<sup>202</sup>

### b. The Knowability and the Possibility of Revelation

The core of the critique of Scripture discussed so far is the proposition that revelation as such is not *knowable*. This critique calls into question, although not directly and explicitly but indirectly and tacitly, also the possibility (and therefore also the reality) of revelation; for what meaning does a revelation have, i.e., a revelation of a law or a gospel, that is knowable only to the bringer of revelation as such! Still, the critique of the knowability of revelation is inadequate for the complete shaking of the authority of revelation. Through this critique, surely that man who wishes to rely on his own sensible experience and rational reflection alone can *defend* himself against all demands resting allegedly or really on revelation; for the reality of revelation cannot be fundamentally shown to be coherent with his experience through the senses and rational reflection and to be in accord with them. But he cannot, on the basis of this critique, *attack* those who, allegedly or actually instructed by divine illumination about the reality of revelation, about the revealed character

201. “the Sadducees . . . erred so farre on the other hand, as not to believe there were at all any spirits, (which is very neere to direct Atheisme).” *Leviathan*, chap. 8 (57–58).

202. “And where St. Paul saies, We shall rise spirituall Bodies, he acknowledgeth the nature of Spirits, but that they are Bodily Spirits; which is not difficult to understand. For Air and many other things are Bodies, though not Flesh and Bone, or any other grosse body, to bee discerned by the eye.” *Leviathan*, chap. 45 (442). “men, that are otherwise employed, then to search into their causes [i.e., of those Idols of the brain], know not of themselves, what to call them; and may therefore easily be perswaded, by those whose knowledge they much reverence, some to call them *Bodies*, and think them made of aire compacted by a power supernaturall, because the sight judges them corporeall; and some to call them *Spirits*, because the sense of Touch discerneth nothing in the place where they appear, to resist their fingers.” *Leviathan*, chap. 34 (270).